



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

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Taking Wales Forward

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Foreword

Taking Wales Forward sets out how this Government will deliver more and better jobs through a stronger, fairer economy, improve and reform our public services, and build a united, connected and sustainable Wales.

A critical five years lie ahead. The UK withdrawal from the European Union creates some uncertainty and challenges, but our mandate is clear. The Welsh Government's relentless focus will be on driving improvement in our economy and public services, which are together the bedrock of people's daily lives.

This document outlines our key priorities for delivering those improvements. They are ambitious measures aimed at making a difference for everyone, at every stage in their lives.

Wales in the 21st century is diverse and complex and our programmes need to reflect that. We need to support people when they need it most, and equip services to respond to challenges, such as an ageing population, a changing climate, new technologies and globalisation. A future outside the European Union asks additional questions of what kind of country we want to be. To provide stability we will continue our commitment to get the right settlement for the people of Wales. We must work together, to take the whole country forward and contribute to delivering goals that we share.

The issues we face can only be tackled through new ways of working, including joined up programmes which reinforce and build on what people and communities are doing for themselves. Taking Wales Forward sets out how we will work across traditional boundaries to deliver our priorities. Four cross-cutting strategies will help us to maximise our impact in these

uncertain times and deliver the promise of the Future Generations Act.

Our work must be guided by financial responsibility and realism. Austerity imposed by the UK Government continues, and every objective analysis of the potential impact of Brexit says we should be prepared for a shrinking economy. So now, more than ever being in Government means choices and we will face tough ones. Where we start new programmes to fulfil our pledges, we must stop something else to pay for it. That is the new reality for this Assembly, and every party must adapt to this if they are to play a serious role in Wales' future.

The promises made by the Leave campaign in the European Referendum have already been consigned to the scrapheap, and so it is for the Welsh Government to prove doubters wrong and show once again that our policies can deliver, even in changed and more difficult circumstances.

Good leadership listens. No one has a monopoly on good ideas. Ours will be an open government, receptive to new ideas and willing to work with others.

Together we can build a Wales that is more confident, more equal, better skilled and more resilient. As a country we have punched above our weight on the international stage, and now we are ready to do more. I want to see a Wales which is prosperous and secure, healthy and active, ambitious and learning, united and connected.

This is the Wales we are determined to build over the coming five years.

Carwyn Jones
First Minister of Wales



Prosperous and Secure

Prosperity brings security to individuals, families and communities. Our aim is better jobs, closer to home. We want work and secure housing for all, supported by sustainable growth in our businesses.

Our ambitions will be shaped by the challenges we face. These include ongoing austerity, UK withdrawal from the EU, globalisation, technological innovation, climate change and an ageing population. This Government will focus on effective interventions which deliver greater financial security for businesses and individuals to build growth and prosperity.

We will foster the conditions needed to allow businesses to thrive and to create and retain high quality jobs in Wales. We will promote manufacturing as a key sector for growth in the Welsh economy. We will reduce burdens on business and stimulate innovation and growth, working with our universities and colleges. We will build infrastructure to keep Wales moving and connect people with jobs, housing and leisure.

Over recent years Wales has raised its profile globally as a first-class place to invest, do business, visit, study, and to live. We have built a global reputation for sustainable development. Building on record levels of inward investment we will constantly seek new markets and investors from around the world, and promote Wales as an active international partner.

We will provide the support that people need to access those jobs. Better schools and better skills have never been so important for our young people and the future of the economy. Through better education and providing skills for life we can help to break the cycle of disadvantage and inequality over the longer term. Our commitment is to offer the skills and experiences people need to thrive and prosper in our times.

Getting people into employment and sustaining jobs is not just about increasing skills. We will improve workforce health, including mental ill health, through ensuring that health services support people throughout their working life.

We are offering a better deal on childcare to remove barriers to secure employment. We want to help those who want to work, or start a business, but are currently constrained by childcare pressures.

We will make significant investment in transport right around Wales to ensure that people can travel easily to jobs and so that businesses can trade smoothly.

Supporting Business

- Deliver a tax cut, meaning smaller bills for 70,000 businesses and reducing business rates bills to zero for half of all eligible firms.
- Create a Wales Development Bank.
- Drive forward inward investment, innovation and the creation of new jobs through a Business Accelerator Scheme for home-grown businesses with global potential designed to improve marketing, advertising, networking and skills investment.

- Promote tech hubs, especially in towns and cities where there are colleges and universities.
- Provide tailored support for co-operatives and mutuals.
- Promote Green Growth to create sustainable jobs for the future.
- Support the development of our successful Creative Industries and Tourism businesses and build on our record of success in hosting major cultural, sporting, business and other events.
- Promote Wales for investment from within the UK and around the world, while helping to stimulate exports to new and existing markets.

Childcare

- Create the most generous childcare offer anywhere in the UK: 30 hours free childcare a week for working parents of three and four year olds, 48 weeks of the year.

Prosperity for All

- Create a minimum of 100,000 high quality all age apprenticeships.
- Reshape employability support for job-ready individuals, and those furthest from the labour market, to acquire the skills and experience to gain and maintain sustainable employment.
- Pilot a Better Jobs Closer to Home project, designed to create employment and training hubs in areas of high economic deprivation.
- Continue to improve our procurement policy to bring economic, social and community benefits to Wales.

- Establish a Ministerial Taskforce for the valleys.
- Deliver the Cardiff City Region Deal and develop a similar deal for Swansea, and Growth Deal for North Wales.
- Carry forward our work on financial inclusion, including support for advice services and credit unions.

Housing

- Work in partnership to deliver an extra 20,000 affordable homes in the next term, including supporting construction of more than 6,000 homes through the Help to Buy scheme.
- Introduce a new 'Rent to Own' housing model.
- Explore options to end land banking.
- Continue long term collaboration with house builders to deliver accelerated rates of house building.

Successful, Sustainable Rural Communities

- Work with partners to secure a prosperous future for Welsh agriculture, building on our early engagement following the EU referendum.
- Support Welsh agriculture by introducing a small grants scheme in the rural development plan.
- Support the work of the Agricultural Advisory Panel for Wales to ensure a decently paid, committed and well-trained workforce.
- Support community-led projects, promote skills development, job creation, entrepreneurship, community energy, rural transport and broadband access.

- Safeguard social housing in rural communities by ending Right to Buy and continuing to support the work of Rural Housing Enablers.

Community Safety and Tackling Extremism

- Build on the provisions of our Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Act (VAWDASV).
- Work with our Police & Crime Commissioners and other partners on issues including VAWDASV and cyber security and crime.
- Work with UK Government to tackle extremism, and with partners across Wales to help combat extremism and ensure security.
- Encourage closer joint working between emergency services.

Environment

- Make progress towards our goal of reducing our greenhouse emissions by at least 80% by 2050 and continue our work to protect and enhance biodiversity and local ecosystems.
- Further our lead over other nations in recycling and minimising landfill.
- Support the development of more renewable energy projects, including tidal lagoons and community energy schemes.
- Invest in the skills required for the green economy, and promote green growth and innovation.
- Continue to invest in flood defence work and take further action to better manage water in our environment.
- Continue our opposition to fracking, based on evidence.



Healthy and Active

Good health underpins all of our ambitions for Wales. We are committed to helping improve health and well-being for all. Living healthy lives allows us to fulfil our potential, meet our educational aspirations and play a full part in the economy and society of Wales. Our ambition is to embed healthy living throughout our programmes and to place a focus on health at the heart of everything that we do.

An ageing, growing and changing population is increasing demand and costs of healthcare. There is still too big a gap between the health of the richest and poorest in our communities. These challenges require a range of responses from birth through to old age maximising health and well-being throughout life.

We remain committed to the founding principles of the NHS, healthcare free and accessible to all at the point of need. We will protect and improve the Welsh NHS over the next five years and ensure it develops effectively to meet future needs.

However, the NHS needs to reflect the needs of our modern society, with closer links between health and social services, strengthened community provision and better organisation of general hospital and specialised services. We will move more care and services from hospitals into communities, supported by integrated and sustainable Health and Care Services capable of meeting current demand and future need. We will deliver timely care and treatment to patients when they need it.

We aim to help children and young people to develop healthy behaviours through their formative years. Education is our greatest longer term lever for improving the life chances of young people. Ensuring young people reach key developmental milestones is fundamental not only to attainment and occupational outcomes, but wider adult health and well-being.

We will promote healthy lifestyles and choices through interventions on preventing ill health and encouraging more activity for general well-being throughout life. We will tackle obesity. We will help develop stronger support for mental illness.

Through supporting people into sustainable employment and tackling mental ill health in the workplace we are broadening the impacts of jobs and growth to offer the support people need.

We take a positive view of the vital contribution older people make to society, including the provision of care. As people live longer we will work with communities to support the ageing population to stay well into later life.

Improving our Healthcare Services

- Introduce a New Treatment Fund to give people in Wales fast access to new and innovative treatments and work to end the postcode lottery for drugs and treatments not routinely available on the NHS.
- Continue to improve access to GP surgeries, making it easier to get an appointment.
- Invest in community pharmacies to take pressure off our GP surgeries.

- Seek to establish a Parliamentary Review into the long-term future of Health and Social Care in Wales.
- Increase investment in facilities to reduce waiting times and exploit digital technologies to help speed up the diagnosis of illness.
- Invest in a new generation of integrated health and social services centres alongside the transformation of our hospital estate.
- Continue to promote exercise and good nutrition, reduce excessive alcohol consumption and cut smoking rates in Wales to 16% by 2020.
- Introduce a new Wales Well-being Bond aimed at improving mental and physical health and to reduce sedentary lifestyles, poor nutrition and excessive alcohol consumption.

Our Healthcare Staff

- Take action to attract and train more GPs, nurses and other health professionals across Wales.
- Ensure more nurses, in more settings, through an extended nurse staffing levels law.
- Invest in training NHS staff and create a single body to commission and provide training and education for all healthcare professionals, especially the primary care workforce to support the work of GPs.
- Work to ensure good industrial relations in the interests of staff and patients.

Healthy and Active

- Introduce a new public health bill.
- Implement the Healthy Child Wales programme to ensure consistent delivery of universal health services up to age seven.
- Work with schools to promote children and young people's activity and awareness of the importance of healthy lifestyle choices.

Mental Health and Well-being

- Prioritise mental health treatment, support, prevention and de-escalation, including a pilot Social Prescription scheme and increase access to talking therapies.
- Work with schools, employers and other partners to improve well-being and promote better emotional health.
- Work to ensure that mental health discrimination is ended.

Care and Older People

- More than double the capital people can keep when entering residential care to £50,000.
- Ensure our ground-breaking social services legislation is fully implemented and all the benefits are realised.
- Retain the Intermediate Care Fund.
- Take further action to make Wales a dementia friendly country through developing and implementing a new national dementia plan.
- Develop a nationwide and cross-government strategy to address loneliness and isolation.

Ambitious and Learning

Our future prosperity and stability depends on the skills and values of the people of Wales. Education has a fundamental role to play in personal fulfilment, community development and wealth creation. Everyone deserves the opportunity to achieve their potential and we believe that education changes lives and drives economic growth. It will build the workforce that we need to deliver the public services that are at the heart of our ambitions for Wales and help us to break the cycle of disadvantage and inequality over the longer term.

We want to create conditions to give every child the best start in life. We recognise the vital importance of the first 1,000 days in every child's life, including a safe, warm home, a foundation for reading skills and good health.

Our education reforms focus on raising standards, closing the attainment gap between the poorest pupils and their peers, and promoting strong leadership and co-operation.

We will continue to transform the education and skills sector through supporting, and expecting, teachers and educators to develop their skills and improving buildings in which children and students learn. In partnership, we will work with parents, teachers, students and education institutions to embrace the challenges ahead. We are ambitious in our shared commitment to a dynamic future for all of our youngest citizens.

A vibrant further and higher education sector is vital to our vision – educating people and supporting businesses and universities in their pursuit of innovation. Our universities, now more than ever, have opportunities and responsibilities as local, national and international institutions.

Underpinning all of our work is a belief that someone's ability to benefit from education should not be determined by where they live or what their income is. We will continue our drive to reduce inequalities and remove barriers to education.

Best Start for Children

- Continue and develop our positive parenting programmes.
- Support families and parents to reduce adverse childhood experiences which can have lifelong effects.
- Continue our innovative Flying Start intervention programme.
- Maintain our commitment to the Foundation Phase.
- Ensure every child gets the best start in life through an extended Pupil Deprivation Grant.
- Seek cross party support for legislation to end the defence of "Reasonable Punishment".

Looked After Children

- Examine ways of ensuring children in care enjoy the same life chances as other children and if necessary reform the way they are looked after.
- Work to reduce unnecessary use of care, building on the work of the Integrated Family Support Service to work with and support the most vulnerable children and families in Wales.

Standards in Schools

- Invest an additional £100 million to drive up school standards over the next term.
- Extend the Pupil Offer developed in our Challenge Schools to continue to close the attainment gap.
- Continue to develop a new curriculum to ensure young people have the skills, knowledge and experiences they need to help develop the creativity and broader understanding of the world needed to be confident, rounded and outward looking.
- Reduce infant class sizes.
- Invest nearly £2 billion in new and refurbished schools, community schools and college buildings by 2024.
- Pilot a new model of Community Learning Centres providing extended services with childcare, parenting support, family learning and community access to facilities built around the school day.
- Legislate for a new system of Additional Learning Needs support.

Schools' Workforce

- Incentivise, recognise and promote teaching excellence so that we raise standards across the board, and develop training and opportunities for teachers and the broader education workforce.
- Develop a new model for the employment and development of supply teachers in Wales.
- Review the impact of current policy on surplus school places, with emphasis on rural schools, to better take account of future growth trends.
- Reshape Welsh teaching in our schools to enable young people to utilise their Welsh language skills in wider society.

Digital Inclusion

- Prioritise schools' access to super-fast broadband within the national programme.
- Support the roll-out of digital competence in our schools and develop coding skills in our young people.

Further and Higher Education

- Prioritise support for enhanced links between education and industry, enabling innovation and entrepreneurship across our public and private sectors in collaboration with our universities and colleges.
- Promote and enhance both academic and vocational routes into and through further and higher education, and the national, international and civic roles of our educational institutions. This includes both full and part-time opportunities that will benefit learners of all ages, employers and communities.

- Develop closer links between universities and schools to strengthen our widening access work and support more of our looked after children to get into university.
- Better utilise our existing relationships with Welsh universities to help sell Wales to the world following the Brexit vote – and work with the sector to ensure protection for students, and important research grants.
- Consult further on the specific recommendations of the Hazelkorn review, including the funding, regulation and governance arrangements for further and higher education.
- Offer the best package of student support available in the UK based on the recommendations of the Diamond Review, with a view to early implementation where appropriate, and without negative effect on the higher education budget.
- Explore potential expansion of the remit of the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol to include further education.
- Maintain the successful Wales Union Learning Fund.



United and Connected

Wales is engaged and connected to the wider world. We contribute to that world and are in turn shaped and influenced by it. The UK withdrawal from the European Union means we must work harder and more actively to give substance to our outward-looking character.

We have seen significant technological advances over the last decade, which provide us with more opportunities than ever to connect within and beyond Wales. These cannot replace the importance of strong communities and transport connections, but they do provide us with additional opportunities to deliver a united Wales and to extend our reach.

We will continue to build a united and connected society, where everyone is respected and valued. Our people will be supported by sustainable services which meet the needs of today while preparing to face the challenges of the future. We will continue to invest in infrastructure to boost the economy and communities of Wales and to connect all parts of Wales.

We will support people and communities from birth through to old age. We are committed to delivering the reforms needed to ensure that our public services are resilient and meet future needs. Our education reforms will change lives and drive economic growth. We will focus on economic interventions which deliver greater financial security for businesses and individuals. We will build a social model of health and social care which better matches local needs and services.

We need to go digital-first in our delivery of government services. We will lead by example, by challenging the health service and education sector to utilise every opportunity the digital age presents.

Our ambition for unity is framed by cultural and democratic structures. We want to see the Welsh language used more extensively and for the numbers who speak it to grow. Culture is the soul of Wales and we aim to help nourish and support it. International links are key to promoting tourism and culture.

Wales' reach goes far beyond our borders. This Government is outward facing and will help position Wales as an internationally focussed, ambitious country. We will seek investment and trade opportunities around the globe. Where Wales has a voice on issues that concern us, we will use it. We will continue to foster international links in higher and further education and to promote and share international best practice in healthcare.

National Infrastructure Commission

- Establish a National Infrastructure Commission to provide increased certainty and sustainability for investment in the future.
- Work alongside the UK National Infrastructure Commission to ensure key investment decisions recognise the needs of Wales.

Transport

- Deliver an M4 relief road, and improvements to the A55, the A40 in West Wales and other trunk roads.
- Create a South Wales Metro and advance the development of a North Wales Metro system.
- Develop a new, not-for-profit, rail franchise and deliver a more effective network of bus services once powers have been devolved.
- Ensure seamless ticketing arrangements and improved marketing as part of the new travel arrangements for Wales.
- Ensure better access to active travel for all.

Digital Connectivity

- Bring people together digitally by offering fast reliable broadband to every property in Wales.
- Aim to help 95% of people gain at least the basic digital skills needed for the 21st century by 2021.

Local Government

- Build a shared understanding of the challenges facing local government and wider public services, and on the need for innovation, to develop a wider conversation about the reform needed, the models and pace of delivery and the pace of change.
- Change the relationship between Welsh Government, WLGA and local government, slash numbers of performance indicators we collect, cut guidance and reform external audit and inspection.
- Provide funding to put in place a floor for future local government settlements.

- Reform local government funding to make councils more sustainable and self-sufficient using the findings of the independent commission on local government finance and Welsh Government's Finance Futures Panel.
- Work with local government to review council tax to make it fairer so that people with low and moderately valued properties pay less than they do now.

Community Assets

- Develop a 'Made in Wales' approach reflecting Welsh needs and aspirations.
- Work with communities to protect local facilities that bring people together, including pubs, libraries, museums, arts centres and leisure centres.
- Maintain a policy of free access to the National Museums.
- Introduce measures to prevent unnecessary closures and to help communities take ownership of community assets where appropriate.

A Fair Society

- Repeal sections of the UK Government's Trades Union legislation in devolved areas.
- Take further action on the living wage, limit the use of zero hours contracts and tackle other rogue and bad practices.
- Implement the two-tier code comprehensively.
- Continue our work with all protected groups to counter discrimination and ensure opportunities for all.

- Work to ensure that membership of our democratic bodies better reflect the whole of society and improve equal representation on elected bodies and public sector boards.
- Support votes at 16, take action to maximise voter registration and explore how digital technology can enhance voter participation.
- Provide the funding to deliver the refreshed Autistic Spectrum Action Plan, including an all-age autism service for Wales.

Welsh Language

- Work towards one million people speaking the Welsh language by 2050.
- Continue to invest in encouraging more people to use and speak Welsh in their everyday lives.
- Amend the Welsh Language Measure so that business and others can invest in promoting the use of the Welsh language and establish a Language Usage Fund.

Armed Forces

- Provide support and services in line with our Armed Forces Covenant.
- Work with key partners in Wales to promote best practice in identifying the Armed Forces Community, whilst improving sign-posting and take-up of services.
- Ensure our veterans continue to receive healthcare that meets their needs and maintain the valuable national Veterans NHS Wales service, which provides access to evidence-based treatments for veterans with mental health problems.

Volunteering & Third Sector

- Work with partners across all sectors to identify more opportunities for people to volunteer.
- Renew our relationship with the Third Sector in order to generate maximum potential for volunteering.
- Work with lottery distributors to investigate the creation of a large scale sustainability fund for voluntary organisations to grow and succeed.



Shared Challenges and Opportunities

Our Future Generations Act has enshrined in law our commitment to develop policy and make decisions in ways that will maximise our impact on the long-term good of our country. This document sets out the steps that will help us move towards a prosperous, resilient, healthier and more equal future. A Wales that will be globally responsible, with cohesive communities, a vibrant culture and a thriving Welsh language.

Our four cross-cutting strategies will set out in more detail the interdependent actions we will take to shape future economic opportunities, strengthen communities, enable people to develop new skills and live healthy and fulfilling lives, improve access to housing and increase the quality and resilience of our natural environment. Just as we do not have the monopoly on good ideas, we cannot deliver our agenda alone. We will work across the public sector and with communities to deliver the Wales we want.



Driving Forward Delivery

We are embracing an ambitious agenda for Wales. There are many achievements on which to build, however the clear message is that we want to deliver more and better jobs, we want to support people to take up these opportunities, to live healthy, fulfilling lives. Our agenda can only be delivered through a relentless focus on driving improvement in our economy and public services.

Taking Wales Forward sets out the four areas where we can have the biggest impact and the headline actions we will take. This is the beginning of our work over the next five years. Our forthcoming Budget will align resources to our priorities. Our four strategies will consider how we can maximise the impact of everything that we do.

The challenges that we face as a nation are complicated and inter-related and require us all to play our part. It is only through embracing a more inclusive way of working that we can hope to deliver our ambitions for Wales. The Future Generations Act presents an opportunity to work differently and engage with others to develop innovative solutions to the challenges that we face.

We already punch above our weight in the world, and the UK's withdrawal from the EU only means that we must work still harder and do even more. We know that major challenges lie ahead and *Taking Wales Forward* gives us a framework for tackling the future with confidence, energy and clarity.

Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.
This document is also available in Welsh.