

## **Meeting of the Workforce Partnership Council (WPC)**

**Monday 1 July 2019 – (12:30-14:30)**

**Cardiff City Hall – Ferrier Hall**

### **1. Introduction and context**

- 1.1 The Deputy Minister for Housing and Local Government welcomed members to the meeting. She thanked the Joint Executive Committee (JEC) for producing a work plan in social partnership. She welcomed the establishment of the JEC's full time secretariat and provided an update as follows:
- 1.2 The Fair Work Commission's report provides a vital context to the Workforce Partnership Council's (WPC's) work. It was published in May alongside an oral statement from the Minister for Housing and Local Government. The Welsh Government is holding ongoing consultations with social partners on next steps. It has accepted the report's six priority recommendations and a Fair Work conference is planned for the summer. This will kick start wider discussion on delivering the recommendations.
- 1.3 The First Minister is due to give an oral statement on 9 July in response to the Fair Work Commission's report. The response will consider where legislation can and can't be used, however, the commitment to Fair Work goes beyond legislation and includes the economic contract with business and the Welsh Government's other levers. The Welsh Government wants Wales to be equal, fair and socially just – and this applies to workplaces too.

### **2. WPC Vision, Mission and Strategic Priorities 2019-20**

- 2.1 Karen Higgins was invited to present the paper for this item by the Deputy Minister for Housing and Local Government. She asked for consideration of three items, acknowledgement of the new WPC arrangements that are now in place, ratification of the proposed WPC vision, mission and strategic priorities and agreement that the JEC further develop and deliver the WPC work programme.
- 2.2 She provided an overview of key decisions taken at the last WPC which initiated new arrangements for WPC delivery. This included the adoption of the WPC Strategic Framework document, the formation of the JEC and the Joint Secretariat (JS) and a requirement to develop an annual work programme for the WPC.
- 2.3 She explained that the WPC vision, mission and strategic priorities had been co-developed through social partnership by the JEC to provide a shared focus for the WPC and its work programme. She outlined four strategic for the work programme as: fair work, future of work, workforce equity and workforce mobility. Each defined by an ambition and related objectives.
- 2.4 She explained that the work programme would be a living document that would evolve over time to take into account new and emerging developments.

Requesting that the JEC be approved to continue to develop the detail and deliver the WPC work programme for 2019-20.

- 2.5 The Deputy Minister for Housing and Local Government asked the WPC if they were content to ratify the proposals for WPC vision, mission, strategic priorities and work programme. The WPC agreed each of these items and also authorised the JEC to further develop and deliver the WPC work programme.
- 2.6 Margaret Phelan raised the issue of the FE and HE sectors status within the context of the WPC. She asked members to agree a form of words that would enable the FE/HE sectors to participate in the WPC and that would convey that, despite their NPISH status, they would be recognised and bound by the agreements reached at the WPC. The Deputy Minister for Housing and Local Government agreed to pursue this on behalf of the Welsh Government.

**Action: The Welsh Government agreed to explore whether a form of words could be agreed with FE and HE to enable participation in the WPC.**

### **3. WPC Agreements – (Annex to WPC Strategic Framework Document)**

- 3.1 The Deputy Minister for Housing and Local Government introduced the paper, saying its purpose is to ensure that we have a shared understanding of how WPC agreements are created, approved and should be implemented. She confirmed not all outputs from the WPC will be formal agreements.
- 3.2 Karen Higgins then presented the paper saying that it had been produced as a further annex to the WPC Strategic Framework Document and was necessary as previous WPC decisions had been interpreted differently by stakeholders prompting a request for clarification.
- 3.3 For any decision to result in a formal agreement all three social partners must agree and accept it as such. A distinction exists between, for example, item 4 on the WPC agenda 'Partnership and Managing Change', which was co-developed between partners, is owned and published as a formal WPC agreement with expectations regarding its implementation versus for example, item 5, the Health and Social Care Workforce Strategy, which is not developed, owned or published by the WPC but which the WPC may choose to support and agree to take action in response to, but for which there will be no obligation regarding implementation.
- 3.4 Three types of documents are identified in the annex, namely agreements, guidance and best practice. Each type of document could stand alone, or could be used together in support of a single subject. The annex details the process and criteria for their development and publication as WPC documents. Reference was made to the process flowchart which offered an overview.
- 3.5 She confirmed all documents will be produced in collaboration between social partners and that once accepted for development the JEC would agree timelines and milestones at the outset. All three partners will need to accept and agree the documents, with all documents coming to the WPC for

consideration and approval before being published under the WPC banner with shared ownership.

- 3.6 The paper was welcomed by all sides. Martin Mansfield said that the paper confirmed the status of the WPC and the role of its members as representatives of their sectors. He explained that agreements made by the WPC are like pay agreements in that they are not statutory but they are binding and implemented without exception. In that regard the reference to 'widespread' on page 12 of the paper should be changed to 'universal'.
- 3.7 The importance of effective communication amongst Trade Union members of the WPC was discussed. It was recommended that this matter was referred to the Trade Union members of the JEC.
- 3.8 It was highlighted that 'public sector' should be changed to 'public services' within the document and that all members should ensure that any future WPC references should be 'public services' rather than 'public sector', so that it is clear that the WPC remit includes wider stakeholders, such as further education colleges and universities, which are non-profit institutions serving households. This was agreed.
- 3.9 It was suggested that the process should reflect engagement with WPC members as a part of the flowchart.
- 3.10 The document was ratified subject to the agreed amendments.

**Action: The WPC Joint Secretariat to remove reference to 'widespread' on page 12 of the WPC Agreements paper and change to 'universal'.**

**Action: Trade Union members to discuss communication with their representatives on the JEC.**

**Action: The WPC Joint Secretariat to amend the WPC Agreements document so that all references read 'public services' not 'public sector'.**

**Action: The WPC Joint Secretariat to amend the flowchart to highlight WPC member engagement within the process.**

#### **4. WPC Partnership and Managing Change**

- 4.1 The Deputy Minister for Housing and Local Government explained that the purpose of this paper is to agree revisions to the Partnership and Managing Change document to bring it in line with the new arrangements following the WPC Review. She then handed over to Karen Higgins who explained that the Partnership and Managing Change document is already an established WPC agreement which was co-developed by social partners and published by the WPC in 2012.
- 4.2 Karen Higgins explained that the revisions bring the document up to date but they do not substantively change the agreement itself, which is not for discussion. She explained that the introduction has been replaced to reflect the new WPC arrangements, with sections that define both the status of the WPC

and the Partnership and Managing Change document. She also confirmed the disputes section has been updated to reflect the new WPC structures.

- 4.3 Tanya Palmer supported the use of the document but asked how members could ensure its principles would be adopted and implemented by the Devolved Employer's side.
- 4.4 Richard Tompkins confirmed that from the NHS perspective they were already compliant as the agreement was addressed through their Organisational Change Policy document and this could be provided to the JEC if required.
- 4.5 Councillor David Poole explained that he would endeavour to establish support for the document within local government.
- 4.6 Reg Kilpatrick highlighted that sectors such as local government will have their own mechanisms in place for any dispute in relation to Partnership and Managing Change and these must be allowed to take place first before any disputes are raised and taken back to the JEC.
- 4.7 Chris Llewelyn confirmed support for the document and felt that both the WLGA and the Trade Union side would want Partnership and Managing Change to work effectively.
- 4.8 The Trade Union side collectively emphasised their expectations that as a WPC agreement, the document would be adopted by Devolved Employers.
- 4.9 The Deputy Minister for Housing and Local Government asked the WPC if they were content to ratify the revisions proposed by the JEC to the Partnership and Managing Change document. The proposed revisions were accepted and ratified by WPC members.

## **5. Health and Social Care Workforce Strategy – Consultation**

- 5.1 Joanne Oak stated that the draft ten year Health and Social Care Workforce Strategy is being developed in response to A Healthier Wales, the long-term plan for health and social services in Wales. Engagement has been extensive across all sectors and a formal consultation will be published in July. The finalised strategy will be launched in November. She emphasised the importance of ensuring the strategy complements the work of the WPC.

## **6. WPC Communications Plan**

- 6.1 The Deputy Minister introduced the item and asked Karen Higgins to present the paper. It was explained that the WPC Communications Plan had been developed to increase the visibility of the WPC, offer openness and transparency and promote the work programme.
- 6.2 The Communications Plan included a WPC website, initial website development had already provided the WPC with a basic web presence. Functionality will be further developed to include an online newsletter by September 2019 and a twitter feed by March 2020.
- 6.3 The newsletter will be published twice a year in between WPC meetings to keep stakeholders up to date with WPC business. A bulletin will be issued for any urgent or time sensitive items and news articles will be prepared for use in

partner communications. A presentation pack with key messages will be made available to support WPC presentations at events.

- 6.4 Karen Higgins confirmed that funding for the website and newsletter had recently been approved and was being met by Welsh Government. She confirmed the content of the first WPC newsletter will be discussed at the next JEC.
- 6.5 The WPC agreed the importance of communications to promote the presence of the WPC highlighting its core aims and the agreements it has reached. The importance of this to the earlier agenda item on agreements was noted by the WPC.
- 6.6 A request was made to include arrangements for internal communications, the provisions within the new WPC arrangements were highlighted and the comment was referred back to the JEC for consideration.
- 6.7 Shavanah Taj explained that communication activity needs to take into account that not everyone within the workforce has access to a computer and on-line content. She highlighted the need for equity and suggested that publications or hard copy alternatives be offered. She further requested that any communications activity was conscious of the need to respect diversity in any content, images or external presentation. Karen Higgins confirmed that the comments would be referred back to the JEC for consideration.
- 6.8 The Deputy Minister for Housing and Local Government asked the WPC if they were content to ratify the WPC Communications Plan. The WPC Communications Plan was ratified by members.

**Action: The JEC to consider and respond to feedback from WPC members on the WPC Communications Plan.**

## **7. Paid Leave for Staff Experiencing Domestic Abuse**

- 7.1 The Deputy Minister for Housing and Local Government explained that the Welsh Government wants to encourage employers to offer paid leave to those affected by domestic abuse. She asked that this issue be placed on the JEC agenda for consideration and this was agreed.

**Action: The WPC Joint Secretariat to put 'paid leave for those affected by domestic abuse' on a future agenda of the JEC for their consideration.**

## **8. Papers to Note**

- 8.1 The papers to note were agreed by WPC members.
- 8.2 Shavanah Taj asked if this would be the last time Paper 8.1 Annual Report – Principles and Guidance on the Appropriate Use of Non-Guaranteed Hours Arrangements (NGHAs) in Devolved Public Services in Wales would be

considered by the WPC. Karen Higgins confirmed the NGHA guidance would remain on the WPC work programme but that it had been agreed the survey approach which underpinned the current NGHA paper would no longer be followed. She asked that if any members had any concerns or suggestions regarding this to please raise them with their JEC representatives as this item is due for discussion at the next (JEC) meeting.

9. The Deputy Minister for Housing and Local Government confirmed the next meeting of the Workforce Partnership Council would be held on the 18 November 2019.

DRAFT

## Attendance List – WPC – 1 July 2019

### **Cabinet**

Chair - Hannah Blythyn AM – Deputy Minister for Housing and Local Government

### **Trade Unions**

Martin Mansfield – Wales TUC

Mike Payne – GMB

Tanya Palmer – UNISON

Dominic MacAskill - UNISON

Shavanah Taj – PCS

Helen Whyley – RCN Wales

Richard Munn – Unite

Margaret Phelan – UCU Cymru

Kelly Andrews – GMB

Neil Butler - NASUWT

### **Devolved Employers**

Councillor David Poole – Caerphilly County Borough Council

Richard Tompkins – NHS Wales Employers

Chris Llewelyn – WLGA

Michelle Morris – SOLACE Wales

Jonathan Lloyd – WLGA

Joanne Oak – Social Care Wales

Julie Rowles – NHS Workforce/OD Directors Group

Katie Antippas (for Peter Kennedy) – HR - Welsh Government

### **Welsh Government**

Reg Kilpatrick – Local Government Directorate

Steve Davies – Education Directorate

Helen Arthur – Health and Social Services Directorate

Judith Cole - Local Government Finance and Policy Division

Rachel Garside-Jones – Employability and Skills Division

Andrea Street – Social Services and Integration – Improvement Division

### **Workforce Partnership Council - Joint Secretariat**

Karen Higgins – Head of WPC Joint Secretariat

### **Observers**

Nisreen Mansour – Wales TUC

Mark Pruce – Welsh Government

Charlotte Cosserat – Welsh Government

Katherine Hatch – Welsh Government

Natalie Priday – Welsh Government

Sarah Abraham – WPC Joint Secretariat

Mark Lewis – WPC Joint Secretariat

Ceri Williams – WPC Joint Secretariat

### **Apologies**

Donna Hutton – UNISON

David Evans - NUT

Albert Heaney – Social Services and Integration – Welsh Government

Peter Kennedy – HR – Welsh Government

Simon Smith – North Wales Fire and Rescue Service  
Tracy Myhill – Swansea Bay University Health Board

DRAFT



## Actions log

| No. | Action                                                                                                                                    | Owner                               |
|-----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1   | The Welsh Government agreed to explore whether a form of words could be agreed with FE and HE, to enable participation in the WPC.        | Welsh Government                    |
| 2   | The WPC Joint Secretariat to remove reference to 'widespread' on page 12 of the WPC Agreements paper and change to 'universal'.           | WPC Joint Secretariat               |
| 3   | Trade Union members to discuss communication with their representatives on the JEC.                                                       | Trade Unions                        |
| 4   | The WPC Joint Secretariat to amend the WPC Agreements document so that all references read 'public services' not 'public sector'          | WPC Joint Secretariat               |
| 5   | The WPC Joint Secretariat to amend the flowchart to highlight WPC member engagement within the process.                                   | WPC Joint Secretariat               |
| 6   | The JEC to consider and respond to feedback from WPC members on the WPC Communications Plan.                                              | WPC Joint Executive Committee (JEC) |
| 7   | The WPC Joint Secretariat to put 'paid leave for those affected by domestic abuse' on a future agenda of the JEC for their consideration. | WPC Joint Secretariat               |