



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Prosperity for All: the **national** strategy

Taking **Wales** Forward



Delivering prosperity for all is the mission of this Welsh Government

Prosperity is not just about material wealth – it is about every one of us having a good quality of life, and living in strong, safe communities.

Our long-term aim is to build a Wales that is prosperous and secure, healthy and active, ambitious and learning, and united and connected. Our Programme for Government, *Taking Wales Forward*, sets out the headline commitments we will deliver between now and 2021.

This strategy takes those key commitments, places them in a long-term context, and sets out how they fit with the work of the wider Welsh public service to lay the foundations for achieving prosperity for all.

It acknowledges that how we deliver is just as important as what we deliver, and in order to make a real difference to people's lives, we need to do things differently and involve people in shaping the services they use every day.

We have produced this short, focused document to better direct the energy and resources of the whole public service. Working with the people of Wales, we will bring our combined efforts to bear on the most fundamental challenges the nation faces. Many of the actions in the strategy will be delivered by the end of this Assembly term, others are about working in a much more collaborative and integrated way, designing solutions for the future – together.

This will involve a radically different way of working for us and our partners. Although government is complex, our objective is simple – to help and support everyone to live healthy, prosperous and rewarding lives. Wales in the 21st century is a diverse place - people's needs vary across the country and at different stages in their lives.

As a nation, Wales has come a long way since devolution in 1999 – growing in confidence and asserting a distinctive Welsh identity in a way that would have been impossible before.

There is much to be proud of, but many challenges remain, and it is only by being honest about these that we can tackle them.

We created and supported nearly 150,000 new jobs during the last government term. Still, too many people lack meaningful employment. This affects their health, and prevents them from reaching their full potential. Sometimes this is beyond their control, but this is where the whole of the public service needs to focus its efforts on helping people across Wales to prosper.

The NHS in Wales is employing more doctors and nurses, treating more people, and people are living longer. But many people are affected by the stubborn legacy of ill-health. The impact on people, families and the economy is vast. We must break the cycle, and help everyone live longer, healthier lives.

Pupils' results are improving, and the performance gap between rich and poor children is narrowing. We cannot accept that many children, and disproportionately those from disadvantaged backgrounds, leave school without the skills they need to get a job. We need to instil ambition for learning into every one of our young people, and leave no one behind.

We have a strong record in driving up recycling rates, putting us first in the UK, second in Europe and third in the world. However, climate change is set to continue, and this means we will have to reduce carbon emissions further, actively managing the risks that climate change presents to health, well-being and to communities.

Although Wales as a whole has grown strongly out of recession, there are areas of the country which have not seen the full benefits of growth. This has left some communities struggling to prosper and feeling isolated from other parts of Wales. Government has a key role in stimulating economic growth in areas of greatest need.

Our communities remain a national asset, and we will invest to re-connect them, physically and digitally, to build a more united and connected nation.

We know that secure employment makes it more likely that people will enjoy good health, education will shape people's employment opportunities and people value the strength and quality of their local communities.

Underlying all of this are complex and interdependent factors. To reflect this, we have developed this strategy, to join up the things we do that most affect people's lives, recognising that government can only support people towards these goals by working differently.

Key Themes

Taking Wales Forward provided immediate clarity about the government's pledges for this Assembly term. Set out in four chapters, it outlined the main commitments that will make a difference to the people of Wales, despite the impact of a decade of cuts to the Welsh budget, and the uncertain impact of Brexit.

The four key themes of this strategy are the same as those in *Taking Wales Forward*. We have set out our vision for each theme, showing how they will contribute to prosperity for all, and how delivering in a more integrated and collaborative way can enhance the well-being of the people of Wales.

Prosperous and Secure – Our aim is to drive a Welsh economy which spreads opportunity and tackles inequality, delivering individual and national prosperity. We will enable people to fulfil their ambitions and enhance their well-being through secure and sustainable employment. We will break down the barriers many face to getting a job, and create the right environment for businesses to grow and thrive.

Healthy and Active – Our aim is to improve health and well-being in Wales, for individuals, families and communities, helping us to achieve our ambition of prosperity for all, taking significant steps to shift our approach from treatment to prevention.

Ambitious and Learning – Our aim is to instil in everyone a passion to learn throughout their lives, inspiring them with the ambition to be the best they possibly can be. A prosperous Wales needs creative, highly skilled and adaptable people, so our education from the earliest age will be the foundation for a lifetime of learning and achievement.

United and Connected – Our aim is to build a nation where people take pride in their communities, in the Welsh identity and language, and in our place in the world. We are building the vital links that make it easier for people to come together, for the economy to grow, and for us to become a confident nation at ease with itself.

Priority Areas

In developing the strategy, we recognised five areas which emerged as having the greatest potential contribution to long-term prosperity and well-being. They reflect the times in people's lives when they may be most in need of support, and when the right help can have a dramatic effect on their life course.

They are priority areas where it has been shown that early intervention - tackling the root causes, rather than treating symptoms - pays dividends. Only a fully co-ordinated response from public services can prevent problems escalating; too often barriers between different services and organisations stand in the way of a truly preventative approach.

If we are to realise the full potential of the Well-being of Future Generations Act, then integration and collaboration between services, with an early intervention and people-centred approach, is essential to delivering long-term outcomes. This is a significant change, and therefore we have decided to place particular focus on five priority areas where we believe, by improving how services are delivered, there can be the greatest initial impact, paving the way for further action over the longer term.

Early Years: an individual's experiences in childhood play a significant part in shaping their future, and are critical to their chances of going on to lead a healthy, prosperous and fulfilling life.

Housing: the bedrock of living well is a good quality, affordable home which brings a wide range of benefits to health, learning and prosperity.

Social Care: compassionate, dignified care plays a critical part in strong communities, ensures that people can be healthy and independent for longer, and is a significant economic sector in its own right.

Mental Health: one in four people in Wales will experience mental ill health at some point in their lives, getting the right treatment at an early stage, coupled with greater awareness of conditions, can in many cases prevent long term adverse impacts.

Skills and Employability: the better people's skills, the better their chances of getting fair, secure and rewarding employment, and the stronger the skills base is in Wales, the more chance we have of attracting new businesses and growing existing ones to improve prosperity.

These are by no means the limit of government's activities, and we will not lose sight of the day to day running of vital public services, while adapting and improving them to reflect this new approach.

Working Differently

This strategy is far more than a list of actions that we will take. This represents a new way of working, one that recognises the challenges we face today, the Wales we want for the future and the steps that need to be taken to make it a reality.

The Well-being of Future Generations Act acknowledges the contribution that everyone can make and gives us a basis for driving a different kind of public service in Wales.

At the heart of this strategy is a recognition that public services and voluntary sector partners want to work together towards common objectives, to focus on the needs of people, at all stages of their lives and in all parts of Wales.

There are already many innovations that support us working this way, such as the Public Service Boards which bring together all those delivering services in communities, to work with them to understand local needs and priorities and decide how they are best delivered.

Through the Valleys Taskforce we are gaining a clearer and deeper understanding about what people really want from their public services, and how we can respond to the barriers which can hinder those services.

Ultimately, the Taskforce is about how we can collectively support the aspirations of people, in one of the areas of greatest need in Wales - and how we should deliver services locally and seamlessly – messages that we will adopt more widely as we deliver this strategy.

Local authorities will be an important partner in delivering this agenda. Achieving our ambitions for Wales will require a different relationship not just between the Welsh Government and local authorities, but also between local authorities themselves. It is only through closer working, on a consistent regional basis, that the resilience and responsiveness of services can be maintained in the future.

Focusing on the five priority areas will help us integrate these services and programmes better, and give clearer direction to our partners. More widely, we can draw on levers that we have as a government and use them to deliver our central goal of prosperity for all: planning, investment in infrastructure, procurement, and tax powers.

Planning decisions affect every area of a person's life. They determine where homes are built, where services are provided, and the quality of the local environment; and they promote

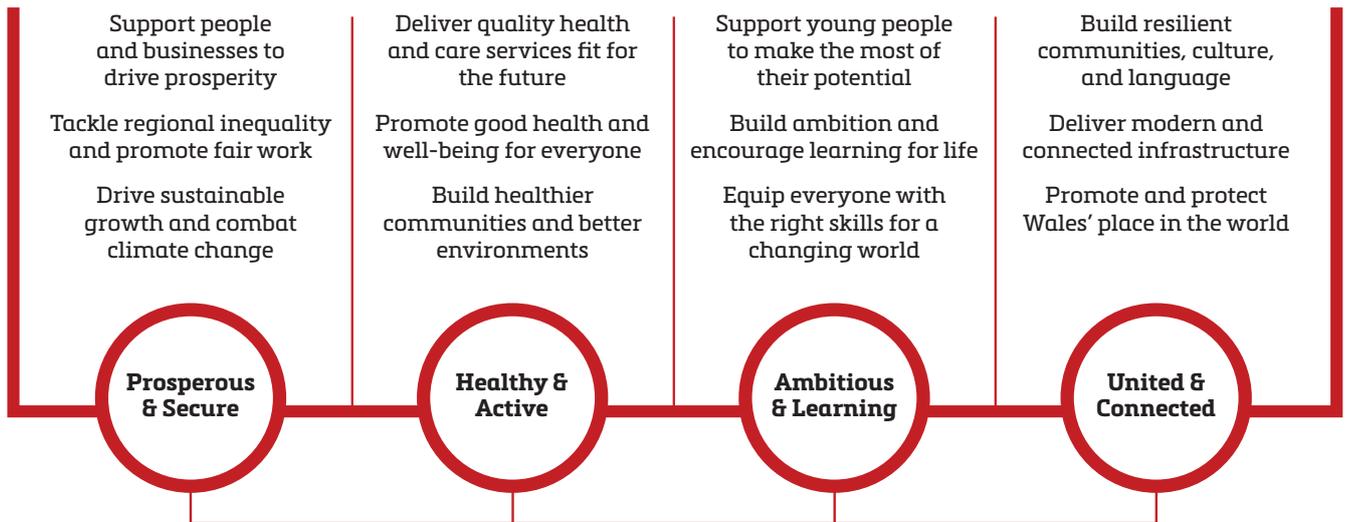
sustainable economic growth and access to open space. The right planning system is critical to delivering our objectives in this strategy.

The way we plan our **capital investment decisions** can have a big impact on the economy, help different organisations to deliver their services in a single place, and minimise the individual's need to travel. Throughout this strategy we commit to co-locate services and this can only happen if we integrate the way that we make our investment decisions.

Each year, devolved public services spend £6 billion **procuring** products and services, with more of this than ever being spent in Wales. By planning better and understanding which products and services are bought over and over again, we can support small and medium businesses to win more of these contracts. The economic benefits will stay in Wales, but our buying power can act as a springboard to develop greater added value to high performing businesses, and their supply chains, who can export products further afield.

New **tax raising and varying powers** for Wales will strengthen the link between economic growth and funding for services in Wales. These powers will provide the government with additional ways to deliver its ambitions for Wales, but it will be important that we use them in a way that supports businesses to thrive and is fair for all.

Well-being Objectives



Key Themes

'Prosperity For All'

- the national strategy

The strategy sets out how we will deliver for Wales during this term
- and set long-term foundations for the future.

'Taking Wales Forward'

- The Programme for Government 2016-2021

The programme sets out what we will deliver for Wales during this Assembly term.



Well-being of Future Generations Act

The Act sets out the need for a long-term focus, and five 'ways of working' to guide the Welsh public services in delivering for people.



Prosperous and Secure

Our aim is a Welsh economy which delivers individual and national prosperity while spreading opportunity and tackling inequality. Through this, people can fulfil their ambitions and enhance their well-being in secure and sustainable employment. A crucial role of government is to break down the barriers many face in getting a job, and create the right environment for businesses to grow and thrive.

We should not see economic growth in isolation. It underpins the ambitions we have for every person and every community right across the country. Safe, secure employment is key to better health and better life prospects.

Economic growth generates the taxes that enable the delivery of high quality public services and helps communities to prosper.

Increasing productivity and competitiveness are central to our economic future. High quality skills, the key role of cities as engines of growth, and the right digital and transport infrastructure will all help us in achieving this goal.

The Welsh Government does not hold all the levers affecting the economy. However, with prosperity for all as our central goal, we are committed to working in a more integrated and focused way to have the greatest possible impact. This means harnessing the efforts of the whole government in health, education, and the environment as well as economic development.

Different parts of Wales have different economic strengths, and therefore we need to take an approach to promoting growth and development which reflects this.

We will support the businesses of today to work more efficiently and sustainably, while ensuring we create an environment which will nurture the businesses of the future, building on Wales' human, creative and natural resources, and improving our economic and environmental resilience. Building a sustainable economy reflects the importance of leaving a strong legacy for future generations.

Therefore our three objectives are delivering the right support for people and businesses, addressing regional inequalities and promoting fair work, and driving sustainable growth.

Support people and businesses to drive prosperity

We will enable people to develop the skills they need to get the jobs they want, supporting businesses to start, innovate, and grow, creating decent, secure employment.

We can all benefit from a growing and prosperous Welsh economy, and businesses, individuals and public services all have vital – and reciprocal – roles to play in delivering this. We will formalise a new partnership approach setting out clearly what businesses can expect from us, and what we as a government then expect from them.

Our pro-business approach means we always want to back businesses with the potential for real growth through targeted direct business support and quality skills programmes. We will also use the spending power of infrastructure investment and public service procurement to benefit Welsh-based businesses.

We look, then, to business to work with us and to invest in their own development, and that of their workforce, treating their employees fairly, and contributing to the wider community.

Economic resilience will be particularly important over the coming years, as depending on the terms of our withdrawal, leaving the European Union is likely to have a significant impact on the Welsh economy and businesses.

Some sectors and regions could be particularly hard hit by issues such as market access and migration, which is why it is vital that they are supported to adapt quickly to new economic conditions following Brexit, maximising opportunities to find new markets.

We will:

- commit to a new **‘Economic Contract’** between business and government to stimulate growth, increase productivity, and make Wales fairer and more competitive.
- simplify and rationalise the **range of financial support** we offer to companies, ensuring it is clear, easily understood and responsive.
- develop **a modern, regulatory framework**, through smarter regulation to ensure competitiveness and the right economic environment for them to grow.
- establish the new **Development Bank of Wales**, improving access to finance for businesses, alongside high quality support services and management advice.
- maximise the **value of Welsh public service procurement** to Wales, while ensuring that employees get a fair deal for the work they undertake funded by public money.
- use our business support **to build capacity and innovation within our home grown businesses** including local supply chains, to enable more to be procured from businesses in Wales.
- further develop **engagement between universities, industry and the NHS and social care** to drive economic growth through applied research and innovation.
- develop a **new employability plan for Wales**, focusing on the diverse needs of individuals, and responsive to the particular skills needs of each part of the country.
- implement our 30 hours **of free education and childcare to support working families across Wales** and make it easier for people to take up and retain jobs.

Tackle regional inequality and promote fair work

We will target interventions to the different economic needs of each region of Wales, ensuring all parts of the country benefit from growth, and promoting every worker's right to a fair deal.

We must focus on the strengths of each part of Wales and use these as a springboard for growth, while ensuring that emerging opportunities are grasped and supporting stronger, regional centres of growth.

This makes social, as well as economic, sense, because regional inequality and insecurity act as a brake on national prosperity; making Wales fairer will make its economy stronger and more resilient.

This new regionally-focused approach is reflected across all areas of our work, including local government reform, which will better equip public services to be an active partner with industry on everything from skills to planning to transport.

We will also promote prosperity for all through seeking improvements in the pay and conditions for those in low-paid and insecure employment through our Fair Work Commission.

The exciting major projects planned across Wales over the coming years must bring with them significant benefits for their regions, and leave a lasting legacy for the people, infrastructure and economy of these areas.

We will:

- introduce a new **regionally-focused model of economic development**, working with each region to determine and drive its own sectors according to its strengths and opportunities.
- focus on a **smaller number of national sectors** where there are particular challenges or opportunities across Wales.
- support **rural businesses to diversify and take advantage of supply chains**, including the need to increase their processing capacity and add greater value.
- ensure the new 'made in Wales' successor to EU structural funds is **fully integrated with our overall approach** and delivers maximum added value for individuals, regions and Wales as a whole.
- design major Welsh Government infrastructure projects to **join up public services and other developments, to maximise regional benefits**.
- harness the **opportunities of major infrastructure projects**, such as Wylfa Newydd and Swansea Bay Tidal Lagoon.
- provide more effective support for the **development of local supply chains** and clusters, so that economic value is retained locally, and more employment opportunities are created closer to home.
- take the steps needed to **make Wales a fair work nation**, building on the work of our Fair Work Commission.
- ensure **commitment to ethical employment** from every business supplying the public service.

Drive sustainable growth and combat climate change

We will build prosperity in a way that supports and sustains Wales' stunning natural environment, ensures that current and future generations will continue to benefit, and makes a tangible contribution to the fight against climate change.

Economic resilience underpins our ambitions for Wales. It is only through innovation that businesses can adapt and improve their productivity and sustainability. At the same time, we need to create an environment that nurtures the businesses of the future, and responds to the need to further develop a low carbon economy.

Our abundance of natural resources is one of Wales' greatest assets, and has shaped our economy over centuries. Today, it supports a range of sectors, including a vibrant tourism and leisure sector, an agricultural industry that sustains viable rural communities and a world-class, home grown food and drink sector.

Our aim is to realise the economic opportunities of Wales' natural resources, whilst building their resilience to support future generations. Low carbon energy generation and greater use of renewable energy sources, including community energy schemes have the potential to cut carbon emissions while benefitting local areas.

Cutting the amount of energy that we use reduces costs for businesses, but can also save money for householders. Improving the energy efficiency of houses brings health benefits, creates jobs and supports local businesses.

We will:

- introduce a new **National Development Framework**, setting out a 20-year land use plan for Wales, guiding strategic development and supported by the National Infrastructure Commission for Wales.
- set out a **low carbon pathway providing clarity and certainty for action and investment** around the low carbon economy through setting targets for 2020, 2030 and 2040.
- accelerate the **decarbonisation of our public services**, creating new opportunities for businesses in Wales in the transition to a low carbon economy.
- establish a **bespoke infrastructure consenting process** which is responsive to business and community needs, to support sustainable economic growth, and to decarbonise our energy supply.
- set out a route map for a **more resource efficient economy**, building on our success in recycling and reducing the environmental impacts of production and consumption.
- deliver a **post-EU agricultural and fisheries policy for Wales**, designed with stakeholders to reflect the needs of the modern Welsh agricultural and fisheries sectors and to manage the impact on the environment.
- work with everyone affected to prepare for a world outside of the European Union and **for a resilient agricultural sector**.
- as part of our new economic contract, expect those **businesses which receive our support to commit to reduce their environmental impact**.



Healthy and Active

Our aim is to improve health and well-being in Wales, for individuals, families and communities, helping us to achieve our ambition of prosperity for all, taking significant steps to shift our approach from treatment to prevention.

This will help secure sustainable health and care services for future generations, improving patient experience and the well-being of the whole population – placing as much emphasis on people staying fit and well as on treating them when they are ill.

The Welsh NHS will continue to be the single largest area of this government's expenditure, reflecting its value to the public, and the importance of rapid treatment for people when they need it, as close to home as possible. It is innovating all the time, leading cutting-edge research and adapting to our changing health needs. However, as with the rest of the UK, our NHS is under unprecedented pressure, through rising costs and public expectations. In order to safeguard the health service and meet its wider responsibility for health improvement, we need to increase the pace of innovation and integration, especially in relation to its critical place in the overall health and care system, and its contribution to raising prosperity.

Many of the conditions treated by the health service every day are avoidable, and everyone should play an active part in shaping their own health. Government also has an important role to play in creating the conditions which improve local environments and make it easier for people to give up smoking, take more exercise and eat a healthier diet.

The Welsh NHS is a significant employer in its own right – delivering services within communities brings with it quality employment. It also has a wider role to play in the delivery of this government's objectives, using its financial scale, professional expertise and track record in innovation to drive research and development across the public and private sectors.

Alongside the government, the NHS, schools, housing, local authorities, social care, the voluntary sector and businesses can all help to create an environment where good health is seen as a natural asset for everyone. We will take action to join up services, rooting them in communities, and deliver a seamless approach through both treatment and prevention.

Therefore, the three objectives are: delivering quality health and care services, promoting good health and well-being, and building healthier communities and better environments.

Deliver quality health and care services fit for the future

We will deliver high-quality, timely treatment, as well as supporting and promoting good health, well-being and independence, recognising that future sustainability requires everyone to play an active part in shaping their own health.

Changing social demographics and more complex and serious conditions pose a significant challenge and place new and different demands on health services. It means that we need to look again at our models of treatment, to make sure they are responsive to patient need, and carried out in the right setting.

The Welsh NHS and care system is constantly innovating, with new treatments and services being introduced all the time. There are also many examples of local innovation in terms of integration and service delivery, but in terms of long-term sustainability, there is a need to accelerate a smaller number of models on a regional or national basis where the delivery of care can be significantly improved for the long-term.

New procedures and technologies mean treatment can be closer to a patient's home, often removing the need for a hospital stay.

This shift must accelerate, to ensure that hospitals are treating only conditions that cannot be dealt with elsewhere.

Over a lifetime, people's health and care needs will vary greatly, often becoming more complex as they age. Having the right support when needed is crucial to living independently and ageing well – it should not matter who the service is delivered by, as long as there is a seamless experience as a whole.

We will:

- continue the drive to improve further **the standard, quality and timeliness of treatment across the NHS**, ensuring access to the services people need, delivering good health outcomes for all.
- further **integrate health and social care**, building on the work of the Parliamentary Review into Health and Social Care, and publish a long term plan for the NHS and social care in Wales.
- deliver a tangible shift in the provision of health and care services **into communities, and away from hospitals**, and shift the emphasis from treating illness to well-being.
- invest in a new generation of integrated **Community Health and Care Centres**, building on the success of the 64 primary care clusters across Wales, which focus on the specific needs of their local areas.
- ensure that organisations delivering health and care services **pool budgets and commission jointly**, delivering a genuinely seamless service for those who need it.

Promote good health and well-being for everyone

We will support people to adopt healthy lifestyles, breaking down the barriers that ill-health place on employment and opportunity, and tackling the generational cycle of poor health and inactivity.

Good health starts before conception, and is developed through pregnancy, childhood and adolescence. Too many children are becoming overweight in their early years, so in line with our focus on the best start in life, working with partners, we will promote the benefits of a good diet and an active life to all parents and children.

Schools also have a critical role to play in encouraging healthy lifestyles and building activity into the day. Embedding healthy lifestyles from the earliest age, and maintaining them through adolescence, will bring benefits throughout people's lives and will also make an essential contribution to a sustainable health system in the decades to come.

We need to prevent as many people as possible being held back by ill-health, too often caused by poor environments and ingrained lifestyle habits such as smoking, lack of exercise, and unhealthy diets. We will continue to increase resources available to the health service, making sure it is there to treat illness. However, people's lives will be better if we work with them to help prevent avoidable diseases, and tackle the causes of chronic conditions.

Good health in old age should be an achievable ambition for all of us. We will reap the benefits of healthy choices and environments throughout our lives, and our communities will benefit from the valuable contribution that active older people can make.

We will:

- support and encourage a substantial **increase in people's physical activity**, adopting a collaborative approach from all agencies involved in the promotion of healthier lifestyles, and drawing on Wales' significant natural resources.
- develop **innovative, community approaches to encouraging more active lifestyles** and improving nutrition through the Well-being Bond.
- deliver an **integrated public transport network** which supports our aim to enable people to travel more actively, by combining different types of transport with walking and cycling.
- introduce a **step-change in public health campaign work**, with measurable outcomes and targets, focusing on avoidable diseases, and building awareness of the positive benefits to people of healthier lifestyles.
- work with and support the business community **to improve the health and well-being of workers** and help people to remain in employment, with a specific focus on mental health and musculoskeletal conditions, including through the economic contract.
- work with NHS Wales to provide people with **digital ways of accessing health and care services** and information, helping empower patients and carers to take greater control of their health and well being.
- deliver an **In Work Scheme** with rapid access to early, work-focused interventions for a range of conditions, helping people to stay in work or return to work more quickly from long-term sickness absence.
- agree new **10 year priorities for Public Health Wales** based on the most recent evidence of the burden of ill health.
- invest in homes to **improve their warmth and energy efficiency**, to improve health and reduce the costs of fuel.

Build healthier communities and better environments

We will tackle inequalities between communities and deliver more services closer to home, acknowledging the importance of communities and the wider environment for good health and well-being.

There are unacceptable variations in the levels of good health between different groups and communities in Wales, which has an impact in all areas of people's lives. This is sometimes caused by the continuing shadow of post-industrial legacies, but also the stubborn impact of poor economic, social and environmental conditions. Too often, it is hardest to access services in the areas they are needed the most.

GP and primary care services are at the heart of their communities, and the main gateway to wider services. We will build on the innovative model of primary care clusters, where a full range of services that support good health, can be accessed from a single location. We will build on this approach to tailor and adapt services to the needs of specific local communities.

The contribution made by the environment to good health cannot be overstated. Air quality, good housing, access to green spaces and energy efficiency schemes each have a part to play in creating the right conditions for better health, well-being and greater physical activity.

We will:

- work to **tackle health inequalities** both in terms of individual well-being and access to services.
- build on the emerging **primary care clusters working across service providers** to tailor public services to local needs, and improve access to a full range of health services.
- co-ordinate **housing, health and social care capital** programmes to provide innovative, affordable, accommodation and nursing care building on the Integrated Care Fund approach.
- **expand the community health and social care workforce**, with innovative new roles, such as 'community connectors' that support social prescribing and more formal partnerships with volunteers and the third sector.
- through planning, infrastructure, regulation, and health communication measures, **we will reduce emissions** and deliver vital improvements in air quality.



Ambitious and Learning

Our aim is to instil in everyone a passion to learn throughout their lives, inspiring them with the ambition to be the best they possibly can be. A prosperous Wales needs creative, highly skilled and adaptable people, so our education from the earliest age will be the foundation for a lifetime of learning and achievement.

Inspirational teaching produces ambitious learners, helping them to absorb ideas, knowledge and experiences, shaping their outlook and expectations of what they can achieve and who they can be.

Our education system must stretch the brightest, while at the same time making sure everyone attains the essential level of skills to build on in later life. This needs to build on a home environment that supports learning and development from the earliest age.

The pace of global technological change has never been as great, meaning that learning and adaptability are at a premium. Skills learned in school must be a solid foundation, and equip young people for life. Still, there is too much variation in the attainment of school leavers, which means without the right skills some risk being left behind and wasting their potential.

In the longer term, the Welsh economy requires the right balance of skills and opportunities, which can only be delivered through partnership between schools, colleges, universities and businesses. The best research and innovation, whether public or private, is driven by people with broad horizons and a global outlook. Converting that research into economic value for Wales also requires the right ambitious and entrepreneurial spirit.

Therefore the three objectives for this strategy are: supporting young people to make the most of their potential, building ambition and encouraging learning for life, and equipping everyone with the right skills for a changing world.

Support young people to make the most of their potential

We will provide the best start in life for all, with support from birth, through education, and beyond, making sure everyone has the chance to fulfil their natural potential.

All the evidence suggests that early years are the most crucial time in shaping life chances, which is why we have made this one of the cross-cutting government priority areas. Getting this right for every child means they stand the best chance of benefitting from the move into formal education.

A child's educational journey should be one of the most enriching and rewarding times of their life. They should leave school equipped with the academic, personal and social skills needed to make a success of their lives.

We need an education system that stretches high achievers, and leaves no child behind. Every child should leave mainstream education with reading, writing and numeracy skills. Teachers play a central role in children's development, inspiring them and helping them to achieve their best. They will often be amongst the first to notice problems, and it must be made easier for them to draw on the widest range of support, addressing issues quickly as they arise, and preventing them getting worse.

Ultimately, we need to be confident that children have the attitudes and learning they need for the rest of their lives, and that teachers have the flexibility to respond to the different ways in which children learn.

Our school system will be centred on a new curriculum designed to give children a broad and enriching learning experience, and to develop the best teachers and leaders to deliver it successfully. This is the basis for progression to post-compulsory education and learning throughout life.

We will:

- focus relentlessly on driving up every pupil's attainment, transforming the **standards teachers must achieve**, and reducing the variations between schools – particularly the gap between higher and lower performing schools.
- establish a **National Leadership Academy** to support the school leaders of the future who will be the driving force behind our reforms.
- ensure more effective workforce planning systems to deliver a **sufficient supply of teachers to work through the medium of Welsh** which will be a key contributor to our target of one million Welsh speakers over the coming decades.
- enrich the learning experience for every child through **changes to our curriculum** that will incorporate the right range of subjects, flexibility for teachers and develop the wider resilience and well-being of young people, helping young people develop into healthy, confident individuals.
- support every learner to **overcome the barriers** to reaching their full potential.
- introduce 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.
- **provide targeted careers advice to help young people to access jobs**, particularly in new and growth sectors and also entrepreneurial opportunities. Fast track the introduction of a new Education Business Exchange Service and account executives who will work with schools and colleges in the Valleys.
- **reform our approach to additional learning provision**, to place learners, parents and carers at the centre of support and develop the skills of the workforce to deliver effective, specialist support for learners at key stages in their lives.

Build ambition and encourage learning for life

We will widen people's horizons and lift their aspirations by creating a dynamic, entrepreneurial culture and ensuring they have opportunities to grow and achieve more throughout their lives.

Education is the springboard that launches everyone into adult life. Many will enter the world of work immediately, others will continue in education, tailored towards the path they want to pursue, be it academic or vocational. The role of government is to support everyone's aspirations, and work with businesses and education and skills providers to put in place the right range of opportunities for all.

Further education in Wales has historically been at the heart of communities, and provided opportunities for individuals to build and fulfil their ambitions. Today, they are offering a wider range than ever of vocational and academic courses, in first-class facilities, deeply rooted in communities. As the diversity of roles people can expect to play during their working lives increase, linking their contribution to the needs of people and business will become more important than ever.

A vibrant higher education system is a crucial partner in building the Welsh economy, equipping individuals with the highest levels of skills required as well as building the public service workforce of the future. Welsh universities undertake cutting edge research every day, and this needs to be increasingly geared to commercialisation and economic growth, supporting the development of our key sectors, as well as the future social cultural and environmental needs of Wales.

A central element of our economic ambition is supporting the creation and expansion of Welsh businesses. This depends on having people with the right entrepreneurial flair and ambition, the right economic conditions, and the right support from government.

We will:

- introduce a **new strategic planning system for post 16 education**, which plans the provision across sectors and responds to the needs of Wales.
- deliver **coherent progression through and between the different post 16 education sectors**, so that the individual's learning pathway meets their needs and aspirations and is not defined by artificial boundaries between academic and vocational routes.
- significantly **increase the maintenance grants** available to Welsh higher education students, breaking down barriers to university and ensure that across grants and loans all students have the equivalent of the National Minimum Wage.
- bring together all **research funding and ensure that funding decisions reflect Welsh priorities**, including the needs of the national and regional economic sectors.
- ensure **closer working between industry, schools, universities, colleges and the NHS** to raise ambition and increase investment in research, developing the jobs and technologies of the future.
- draw on Wales' assets to **develop a population based approach to health and care research** through Healthwise Wales.
- focus our business support schemes on **building an entrepreneurial culture** in Wales, and establish **targets for the numbers of school, college and university leavers starting companies**, as well as targets for their sustainability and growth.

Equip everyone with the right skills for a changing world

We will enable people to develop their skills in line with the rapid changes in the global economy, to keep Wales competitive and secure employment in an uncertain world.

Lifelong learning has never been more important, both for national prosperity and individual development. The advent of the fourth industrial revolution is bringing profound changes to the economy, environment and society, and the challenge for our future resilience is to position Wales to benefit. This means ensuring sufficient opportunities emerge in the new economy to replace those that could be lost in the old economy, and to ensure that people are equipped with the skills to exploit them.

Digital skills will be a particularly vital part of the new economy, and as well as building coding and other aspects of digital literacy into our new curriculum, greater support will be needed for people already in work, or seeking work, to develop these skills.

Good employers place a premium on highly skilled workers and will themselves invest in developing and adapting their workforce. Government also has a critical role in providing the training that people and the economy need.

As part of the move to supporting regional growth priorities, we will be more responsive to variations in skill needs across Wales. To adapt effectively to this changing world, we need to get the often complex interplay between business, government and educational institutions right.

We will:

- work with the regional education consortia, universities, business, industry and the third sector to **expand the network of code clubs in every part of Wales.**
- enhance our **support for part-time and postgraduate students** to make it easier to obtain the higher level skills our economy needs.
- work with the Regional Skills Partnerships **to anticipate future skills needs**, focusing on priority growth sectors identified within regions and aligning our programmes to those needs.
- deliver **100,000 all-age apprenticeships aligned to economic requirements** and use them to raise overall levels of skills in the workplace.
- **review all existing skills and work-based learning programmes** to ensure they meet the current needs of the economy and can respond flexibly to emerging requirements.



United and Connected

Our aim is to build a nation where people take pride in their communities, in the Welsh identity and language, and our place in the world. We are building the vital links that make it easier for people to come together, for the economy to grow, and for us to become an ever more confident and outward looking nation.

It is the strength of the links between people, within families, neighbourhoods, workplaces or wider communities, which gives us our sense of belonging and well-being. Government cannot create communities, but just as with the economy, we can foster environments where these links are broadened and deepened.

Communities prosper where people can participate fully and play an active role in shaping their local environment, influencing the decisions which affect them. People can play many different roles within their communities, and they need to be empowered to do the things that really make a difference.

We want a Wales of connected communities, and that means making sure that all the links needed are in place to bring them together. Transport and digital infrastructure are critical to providing the services we all need to stay healthy, to learn, to access employment, and to build prosperity.

Wales' connections with the wider world are equally important, not least as we tackle the uncertainties of EU exit. The strength of our overseas relationships and connectivity will determine our ability to forge new markets and maintain our position as an attractive and competitive place to invest and do business.

Therefore the three objectives for this theme are: building resilient communities, culture and language, delivering modern and connected infrastructure, and promoting and protecting Wales' place in the world.

Build resilient communities, culture, and language

We will build a country characterised by vibrant, welcoming and cohesive communities, with pride in the present and ambition for the future - a truly bilingual nation, celebrating its unique culture, heritage and diversity.

The strongest communities have people who want to step forward to get things done. These are individuals who often seek no reward, other than seeing their community prosper. Government's role is to support and empower those who want to make a difference, and to make sure they have the space to pursue their vision.

Public assets within communities are often key in enabling innovative local initiatives to become a reality. How these are made available to community groups can unlock the potential for communities and leaders to enhance local areas.

We will:

- work with communities to **help maintain local facilities that bring people together**, including pubs, libraries, museums, green spaces, arts centres and leisure centres, helping communities take ownership of assets in their local area.
- identify opportunities for more people to volunteer, including working with the WCVA and the third sector on the **roll-out of a unified volunteer programme, Volunteering Wales**.
- work with communities across Wales to **promote and facilitate the use of Welsh in a positive and inclusive manner**, improve systematic planning of Welsh language provision, and provide a robust regulatory framework.
- build the capacity of communities **as places which support better health and well-being** using approaches such as social prescribing.
- ensure **schools take on a more wide-ranging role as community hubs**, offering not just education but a much wider array of community activities, helping to join up their communities and the services people need.
- build a **sustainable relationship with the Voluntary Sector**, based on the outcomes we all want to achieve for communities and the right funding model to deliver them.
- develop a transformational approach to the learning, teaching and assessment of Welsh with the aim of **ensuring that, in future, all learners will be able to use the Welsh language when they leave school**.
- trial **reforms to the democratic process**, modernising the elections process and backing votes for those aged 16 and over.
- improve the way we **work with community groups and the police to develop safer communities**.
- work with communities, the voluntary sector and local services to **counter the threat of extremism and hate crime** in communities.

Deliver modern and connected infrastructure

We will invest in the 21st century connections we need to thrive and compete, joining up people, communities, businesses and services to drive prosperity.

High quality, modern infrastructure is a key enabler of competitiveness and productivity. Investment can act as a catalyst for wider regeneration and supporting vibrant communities. The investment needs to be intelligently planned and well delivered to have maximum impact.

Our approach to regional strengths and diverse economic needs is reflected in our programme for investing in infrastructure. Some developments, such as superfast broadband and comprehensive mobile coverage, are nationally important programmes. In other areas, there are specific projects which support and enable the growth of regional economies.

Digital connections that anticipate the needs of the future can help us to change our working patterns, reducing congestion, and supporting our aspirations for lower carbon living.

Our attitudes to, and expectations of, transport are likely to change in ways that we cannot currently anticipate. With the geography of Wales and the needs of sparsely populated rural communities, cars will remain important, but new powers over buses and the rail franchise mean that we can take a more joined up view across all types of transport, enabling us to reduce our carbon emissions, promote active travel, and get the most from our spending on public transport.

We will:

- introduce the new **National Infrastructure Commission** for Wales to strengthen the governance and strategic planning of major infrastructure investments.
- require **co-ordinated planning of new homes, facilities and infrastructure** by local authorities, health bodies, housing associations and other key partners.
- deliver **a single National Transport Plan** supporting improvements to all the transport infrastructure for Wales, balancing travel needs with the aim of reducing emissions.
- create **an integrated public transport network**, covering the rail and bus networks, which is safe, reliable, affordable and low carbon.
- deliver the **South Wales Metro**, underpinning the region's economic development, and spreading jobs and prosperity through more rapid transport, and ensuring that all new and significant developments in the region are sited within easy reach of a station.
- continue to develop the **North Wales Metro** and deliver transport improvements that complement it.
- deliver **a significant improvement to the M4 around Newport**, as well as enhancements to the A55, the A40 in West Wales and other trunk roads.
- deliver **fast reliable broadband** to those parts of Wales not currently served by the market.
- work with the mobile industry and OFCOM to **deliver usable and reliable mobile phone connectivity across Wales**.
- help people and businesses make the most of digital connectivity **by investing in digital skills** and through our business support programmes.
- support **increased use of low emissions vehicles**, through investing in a network of charging points.

Promote and protect Wales' place in the world

We will ensure Wales remains outward-looking and fully engaged on the European and global stage, fostering new relationships for trade and investment, and promoting the best of our nation world-wide.

EU exit marks a fundamental shift in our international environment. Although the shape of a final deal remains unclear, the implications are far-reaching and long term. Fighting for the best outcome for Wales is a top priority of this government.

Wales is a globally engaged and trading nation. Our prosperity depends on international relationships. We now need to deliver a step change in our international performance, building on the close relationships already established with nations and regions around the world. The introduction of long-haul flights connecting Wales with the Far East and beyond will be instrumental in improving our international connectivity.

Tourism creates a growing share of our wealth, and recognition of Wales around the world is crucial. International sport, and excellence in culture and research, have helped define modern Wales around the world. Promoting Wales with renewed energy will make the most of our economic opportunities, and help maintain Wales' current competitive advantages after EU exit.

With two thirds of Welsh exports currently going to the European market, we will do everything possible to maintain a relationship with the European Single Market that allows companies to maintain free and unfettered access.

Our international offices and trade advisers work closely with Welsh businesses to help access new markets in North America, the Middle East, the Far East and elsewhere.

We are leaving the EU but we are not leaving Europe. Our reputation as a leader in areas such as sustainability, culture and research must be maintained, and Wales will remain an engaged European – and global - nation.

We will:

- build on the successful Wales brand to **reinforce a contemporary, compelling and engaging identity for Wales** that drives the nation forward as a place to do business and study and that inspires the people of Wales to create their future with confidence.
- take a **strategic approach to the expansion of our international offices**, based on an assessment of economic opportunity for Welsh businesses.
- modernise our global digital presence through a **new digital gateway at wales.com**, comprising of a network of integrated, international websites that promote a consistent story about Wales.
- work with the Department for International Trade to support our exporters to **find new markets globally**.
- continue to press the UK Government to prioritise full and unfettered access to the EU Single Market and work with the UK Government to **promote Wales' interests** as new international Free Trade Agreements are prepared.
- develop new ways to **build and maintain European partnerships** through investing in networks and bi-lateral co-operation with partner countries and regions, especially neighbours such as Ireland and Brittany.

Five Cross Cutting Priorities

Early Years

Vision

We want children from all backgrounds to have the best start in life. Our aim is that everyone will have the opportunity to reach their full potential and lead a healthy, prosperous and fulfilling life, enabling them to participate fully in their communities and contribute to the future economic success of Wales.

There is substantial evidence to suggest that delivering the right support for all children, particularly those from deprived backgrounds, is the best means of breaking the poverty cycle, and raising aspiration and attainment for everyone. This underpins our central ambition of creating prosperity for all, reducing inequality, and promoting well-being. Investing in early years is an investment in the economy and workforce of the future. By tackling problems early, we are far more likely to stop children encountering difficulties at a later stage, when they can be much harder to solve.

Childhood

The first few years of a child's life are critical to laying the foundation for lifelong well-being. They determine how well children perform in school, how well they relate to others, and ultimately shape the adult they become. A series of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) can have a devastating effect on development. This is why it is so important to lay successful foundations from the earliest age.

Parenting

Confident, positive and resilient parenting is fundamental to preparing children for life. Parents have by far the greatest influence on their children, but it can at times be an overwhelming experience. This is when help and support needs to be on hand, in order to help them create supportive and enriching environments for their children. Our approach is shaped by the understanding that needs vary between people, and vary over time.

Inequality

There are still significant gaps between the educational performance of different groups of children, with persistent under-achievement by those from more deprived and disadvantaged backgrounds. These are children who will benefit most from a concerted programme of support to give them the best start – an advantage they will carry with them for the rest of their lives.

We will:

- build on our current early years programmes and create a **more joined-up, responsive system that puts the unique needs of each child at its heart.**
- ensure that the early years provision in the new curriculum **builds strong key skills, and embeds health awareness, well-being and resilience** in children from the earliest stage.
- ensure **consistent regulation and delivery of pre-school provision.**
- deliver **extended, coherent support for parenting**, drawing together family support programmes, focused on positive parenting and early intervention.
- provide working parents of 3 and 4 year olds with **30 hours of free education and childcare** for up to 48 weeks a year, delivered in a way that works for parents and children.
- legislate to **ban the physical punishment** of children.
- create **'ACE aware' public services** which take a more preventative approach to avoid ACEs and improve the resilience of children and young people.
- pilot **Children First areas, to support the better integration of services** to reduce the numbers of ACEs and improve the resilience of children and young people.

Housing

Vision

We want everyone to live in a home that meets their needs and supports a healthy, successful and prosperous life. Good quality homes are the bedrock of good communities, and form the basis for individuals and families to flourish in all aspects of their lives.

Investment in improving the quality of housing is proven to reduce pressures on other public services; notably health and social care. There is significant evidence showing links between cold, damp homes and respiratory disease and asthma. These health problems can contribute to adverse childhood experiences as well as having a negative impact on children's ability to learn.

Providing secure, affordable housing is the strongest basis for supporting vulnerable individuals to overcome mental health and substance misuse issues. Investing in housing, quality local environment and energy efficiency brings significant economic benefits, creates jobs, and builds stronger communities.

Homelessness

It is unacceptable that people are forced to sleep on the streets in a prosperous society. Wherever possible, we will tackle the root causes of homelessness, recognising that prevention plays a major part in avoiding the spiral of decline caused by losing a home. But when crisis strikes, we must act swiftly to provide a strong safety net, and get people back on their feet as soon as possible. Those living rough often have complex needs and we need to respond to all of them, providing a joined up service, and recognising that not having a home can severely impact the ability to get help.

Affordable Housing

The housing market in Wales, like that across the UK, is under extreme pressure. There is a complex picture of provision, and the challenges that people face vary significantly, depending on income and where they live in Wales. Government intervention, therefore, needs to be specifically targeted, using all the levers at our disposal, and working with housing associations, local authorities, private house-builders and the private rented sector to maximise supply and respond to different needs.

Independent Living

Good housing plays a critical role in healthy, independent ageing. Enabling people to stay in their homes for longer brings significant health, social and economic benefits. We need the right kind of housing in the right place that matches people's needs. In some cases these will be purpose-built, in others, through adaptations to existing homes.

We will:

- deliver **our target of 20,000 new affordable homes** by 2021, and make **more homes available at affordable rent** in every part of Wales.
- make **buying a home more affordable** through the Help to Buy scheme and Rent to Own scheme and bring **buying a home in high cost rural areas** within reach of local people through Homebuy.
- accelerate our **support for new and innovative housing designs** to meet challenges including pressing housing need, fuel poverty, climate change and demographic change.
- end **Right To Buy and Right to Acquire** in order to protect social rented housing for those in need, and give councils and housing associations the confidence to build.
- work with local authorities **to begin council house building at pace and scale** for the first time in decades.
- significantly **reduce the number of people forced to sleep on the streets** by focusing on the individual support needs of rough sleepers, and deliver earlier and more effective interventions for those at risk of becoming homeless.
- unlock **the potential of SMEs to build homes** and deliver local skilled jobs in all parts of Wales.
- incentivise **housing providers to build homes which respond to the challenges of an ageing population** and which enable people to live independently and safely in their own homes for longer.
- link **new housing with major new infrastructure developments**, for example the Metro and Wylfa Newydd.

Social Care

Vision

We want Wales to have a high quality and sustainable social care sector, with preventative and integrated services in the community, supporting people to lead independent lives. With an ageing population, the demand for and cost of care is projected to increase. In a sector which can struggle to recruit and retain workers, our aim is to ensure that this demand is met, and care is affordable, whilst improving quality.

Stepping in to take early action is essential to help children stay in families, and to reduce the impact of physical and mental ill-health. It also reduces abuse and neglect and leaves fewer people needing care.

Children

Children in care should have a secure place to live, receive a good education, safe contact with their family, and be protected from abuse and neglect. They should expect to be listened to and be helped to develop positive relationships. We need to ensure looked after children receive as much help as possible and enjoy the same early years support and life chances as other children.

Adults

Vulnerable adults may need help to access services, and engage in work, training, education or volunteering. They may need assistance in finding suitable housing, along with physical and emotional support, in order to be able to live full lives. In particular, young care leavers need intensive support at this key transitional stage of their lives, with attaining appropriate skills, improving employability, and access to safe, secure homes.

Older people

Maintaining a good level of physical and mental health into older age aids independence, and reduces social isolation. It helps society benefit more from the contribution older people can make, capitalising on their knowledge and experience. Many older people will need additional support to live independently and our goal is to enable them to stay in their own homes for as long as possible. However, if that is no longer possible, we need a care sector which is

sustainable, and treats individuals with dignity and respect.

We will:

- invest in a **new innovative care delivery model in the community**, building a more diverse sustainable care sector in Wales, working with private and public sector partners.
- establish **centres to co-locate support, advice and treatment services**, taking advantage of innovative new technologies.
- assist care providers to **create sustainable business operation models** in the heart of our communities, including advice and support from Business Wales and the Development Bank of Wales.
- develop **innovative funding models** to ensure that funding is available in the future to meet social care needs.
- recognise and **incentivise high quality care** through the development of Inspection ratings and funding for Qualification Credit Framework training for care workers who are over 25, encouraging care providers to share good practice and to be centres of excellence.
- **raise the profile and status of social care workers**, through improving employment conditions and remuneration, so social care becomes a positive career choice, where people are valued and supported responsibly.
- implement an **accredited qualification for carers**.
- build more **purpose built housing developments** that would allow people to live independently within a protected and sheltered environment, located close to easily accessible public transport.
- raise the **educational attainment and improve life chances of children in care**, adopting a child centred approach, through the collaboration of education, social services and others.
- strengthen edge of care services to provide families with timely support to **reduce the numbers needing care provision and provide assistance in the key transitional phase post 16** to access further education, jobs and housing for those leaving care.

Better Mental Health

Vision

We want to ensure that mental health problems are not a barrier to achieving potential in all areas of life. One in four will be affected by mental health issues at some point during their lives and for many the support of their family and friends will be enough.

However, when more intensive support is needed, we need a system which is easily accessible, and focused on identifying and treating as early as possible, before crisis point is reached.

Children

Wherever possible, we will give children and young people the tools to cope with the stresses of growing up in a rapidly changing society, where online bullying is a new and worrying phenomenon. Referrals to child mental health services have almost doubled over recent years, reflecting greater awareness but also placing a strain on services. Schools are in a unique position to identify problems early, and provide support for children and a rapid gateway to further support where appropriate. The deep intergenerational and family effects of mental health issues should be recognised, and the adverse childhood experiences that can result.

Adults

Many people suffer from mental health issues but do not feel able to talk about them openly, or seek help. Again, there are positive signs of social change, but more still needs to be done to break down the stigma surrounding mental health conditions. Forty per cent of work-related illness is reported as stress and results in an average absence of 24 days. Mental health issues vary in their severity, and responses should always be appropriate, proportionate and timely including approaches such as social prescribing, rather than simply treating with medication.

Older People

Remaining mentally and physically active into old age is critical to reducing the risk of developing dementia, other health conditions, and depression as a result of loneliness and isolation. Giving people opportunities to remain active provides a benefit to our communities as well as helping people enjoy positive mental health well

into their old age. However, with more people living longer, the number of dementia cases will continue to rise. Alongside dignified care for the individual, we need to recognise the impact on families and carers.

We will:

- continue our programme **to improve mental health services** for all in Wales, improving the quality and integration of services, addressing mental and physical health needs in tandem and enabling a better transition between different services.
- build on the work we have done which has enabled nearly 140,000 people to access support from the new mental health services in primary care since the introduction of the Mental Health Measure, by improving **access to psychological therapies** in both primary and secondary care for both adults and children.
- design our new curriculum and assessment arrangement in schools to **place real and meaningful focus on well-being**, and developing the mental resilience of children and young people.
- make sure **teachers have the help and support they need to respond to children experiencing difficulties**, by ensuring effective links and joint working between schools' counselling services, education psychologists, children and adolescent mental health services and neurodevelopmental services and designated support for clusters of schools.
- deliver a new community **perinatal mental health service** and review the need for inpatient facilities in Wales, to stop post natal depression worsening and to allow mothers to form a strong early bond with their child.
- help people with dementia and their families and carers to access information, advice and support to maintain their independence **by a joint health service/local authority 'team around the family approach'**.
- deliver a pilot to explore how **social prescribing** can help to treat mental health conditions.

Skills and Employability

Vision

We want an economy founded on high quality skills, giving businesses the resources to grow and innovate, and people the ability to prosper. Every person should be equipped with the skills they need to get a job and the opportunity to develop new skills through their working life.

Low skill levels are the single biggest barrier to building the Welsh economy we want, and often the biggest barrier for individuals in securing meaningful work. It is critical we tailor skills support to individuals' needs, while addressing other barriers such as poor health, transport and caring responsibilities to drive up prosperity levels for all.

Employable People

Good skills are a key factor in determining whether people get good jobs. We need to make sure that everyone has access to the training they need throughout their lives. People can follow many routes to higher skills, for example apprenticeships, work-based learning, and further and higher education. All of these options need to complement each other to enable people to pursue the careers they want. Our new approach to employability will deliver a seamless referral and support service for people who need basic skills, and people who need to raise their skill levels to get a job or progress in their career.

Skills for Business

Good skills unlock growth and innovation for businesses, which means they need to be able to recruit workers with the right skills. Businesses also have a responsibility to invest in their workforce to benefit themselves, their workers and the wider economy. As a government we are committed to link the training we provide even more closely to the needs of the Welsh economy.

Strong Economy

Good skills make Wales a more attractive destination for investors, bringing with them the higher-end, higher-paying jobs we need. Better and more transferable skills help people to move more easily between jobs, progressing from lower-paying roles with limited prospects. The higher the skill levels, the more resilient our economy will be, and better able to ride out economic shocks.

Leaving the European Union will mean we must redouble our efforts to build an even more competitive economy, and higher skills are at the core of this. Automation remains a growing threat to jobs, but the best defence will be people with the ability to work better and smarter than machines and able to solve the problems they can't.

We will:

- deliver a **school curriculum which meets the skills needs of individuals and the wider Welsh economy**.
- ensure that our **skills provision through schools, further and higher education and work-based learning reflects current employer needs** and keeps pace with the economy of the future.
- promote **closer links between schools, colleges, universities and employers and businesses, public services, and the NHS** to better anticipate the skills needs over the coming years.
- reform our economic development and skills provision **to work on a regional basis**, building on the three employer-led Regional Skills Partnerships.
- reconfigure our current offer into a **new employability programme that is simpler and more responsive** to the needs of individuals and employers.
- set out a **common approach to identifying the needs of the individual as part of a new approach to employability**, identifying those with employment support needs at the earliest possible stage and making the referral process more seamless and less daunting.
- provide **tailored, community outreach** for those who face multiple barriers to work.
- use the Valleys as a test bed for a **place-based approach to enhancing employability**, including extending the Flexible Skills Programme to drive a focus on engaging employers in deprived areas.
- improve health and employment outcomes through **employers, health services and employment services** working together more effectively, including supporting employees at risk of long-term sickness to stay in work through our In Work scheme.

