# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE**  | **Welsh Government Response to Fair Work Wales**  |
| **DATE**  | **09 July 2019**  |
| **BY** | **Julie James AM, Minister for Housing and Local Government**  |

At the beginning of May I made an oral statement on the publication of the Fair Work Commission’s report Fair Work Wales which was published on 3 May. I said that we would be providing the Government response after Ministers had considered and discussed the report and its implications for their portfolio areas with their officials which we had hoped would be at the end of June.

The Commission made a total of 48 recommendations across eight areas for action, they included six priority recommendations designed to convey Welsh Government commitment to the fair work agenda and set the necessary direction and foundation for driving the work forward. I was pleased to confirm in my oral statement that Welsh Government would be accepting the six priority recommendations. These are:

**Recommendation 1:** Fair work will become the responsibility of all Welsh Ministers and officials;

**Recommendation 2:** The definition of fair work will be adopted and used across Welsh Government and in its promotionof fair work;

**Recommendation 10b:** The commission's findings will be used to inform the development of the proposed social partnership Act;

**Recommendation 26:** The findings will also inform how Welsh Government will promote trade unions and collective bargaining;

**Recommendation 35:** A structure is being established within Welsh Government to co-ordinate and drive fair work activities – the new Social Partnership and Fair Work Directorate will be positioned within the Office of the First Minister and Brexit; and

**Recommendation 42:** Ministers will monitor how fair work is being advanced within their areas to inform an annual Welsh Government report on fair work Wales.

Fair work accords with the long-established traditions in Wales of social solidarity and community cohesion. It is vital to addressing the inequality, poverty and well-being challenges we face in a twenty-first century Wales. I believe that the commission has developed achievable recommendations that provide a practical route forward to deliver Fair Work Wales.

We appointed the Fair Work Commission to consider and work alongside our social partners to make recommendations on how Welsh Government can promote and encourage fair work in Wales. The Commission has produced, what is generally agreed to be, an excellent and measured report and I would like to convey once again the Welsh Government’s gratitude to the Commission members for their commitment, expertise and significant contributions. To the Chair, Professor Linda Dickens, Sharanne Basham-Pyke, Professor Edmund Heery and Sarah Veale. We are also grateful to Professor Alan Felstead, who supported the Commission as Independent Expert Adviser.

We felt it important for the commission to be independent of Government in order for it to be objective and feel able to call it as they see it. The report was drafted by the commission, free from editorial input from Welsh Government.

We sought comments from the social partners in order to incorporate their views within the Government Response and I am pleased to say that the Report has been well received by our social partners:

The Wales TUC has said that it has long campaigned to make Wales a Fair Work nation through social partnership and the Commission’s Report is a welcome contribution towards achieving that aim.

The CBI consider Fair Work Wales to be a well-timed and well-evidenced report which will help inform Welsh Government’s next steps on fair work but would wish to see further work undertaken in certain action areas.

The FSB has also welcomed the Report. As an organisation whose members will have a key role to play in the delivery of this agenda, it was pleased to see the Commission’s conclusions taking into account many of the lived experiences of SMEs in Wales and the potential within this section of the business community to deliver fair work. Whilst the FSB has broadly welcomed the Commission’s findings in their entirety, like the CBI, it feels that there are a number of areas which will require further work and clarification.

We are therefore pleased to say that we will be accepting, in principle, the remaining 42 recommendations. We will now need to go through the detail of the recommendations to understand their impact on policy development and delivery and given the breadth and overlap of the recommendations, consider their cumulative impact and how they will all hang together.

We will also work to provide the clarity sought by our social partners and work with them to develop an agreed approach to delivering Fair Work Wales.

The first step is to establish a Social Partnership and Fair Work Directorate which we are in the process of creating; one of the first objectives of the new Directorate, once established, will be to develop a strategy and implementation plan for the Commission’s recommendations which we will share with you in due course. In the intervening period and in line with Recommendation 41 we will be reporting on our progress before the end of this year.