# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE**  | **Working Wales advice service**  |
| **DATE**  | **8 March 2019** |
| **BY** | **Ken Skates, Minister for Economy and Transport** |

As outlined in the Progress report on the Employability Plan in September 2018, a new employment advice service is in development. At this uncertain time for the Welsh economy, it will be a key mechanism for ensuring more streamlined employability support to individuals across Wales.

As Minister I will be launching the new Working Wales service on 1st May 2019.

Working Wales (known previously as the Employment Advice Gateway) will be delivered by Careers Wales and will provide an all-Wales entry point to employability support.

I am clear that Working Wales needs to simplify access to enable young people and adults to receive the right support, whatever their barriers to employment. It will work across multiple programmes and interventions and in partnership with existing support networks.

Advice and guidance will be provided face-to-face at Careers Wales offices, local job centres or community hubs, as well as over the phone and online.

Trained Working Wales advisors will help individuals to identify barriers to employment and talk with the customer about their personal circumstances and aspirations. Based on this, advisors will be able to identify their best route to employment, the most appropriate training and education, and the most suitable support, referring the individual to the right service.

Alongside the development of the Working Wales advice and support service, we have also made progress in the development of our new employability programme. As outlined in Prosperity for All, the programme will consolidate Welsh Government’s current suite of employability support including:

Jobs Growth Wales

ReAct

Access

Traineeships

and the Employability Skills Programme.

It will also complement our existing community based employability programmes, Communities for Work, PaCE and Communities for Work Plus.

The new programme will deliver a new and joined-up approach to employability and skills support, designed to meet individuals’ needs rather than aligning them with programme eligibility criteria.

It will support people of all ages to overcome barriers to achieve and maintain good quality, sustainable employment.

Following a recent pause in the procurement for the delivery of the new programme due to concerns about the evaluation methodology, a new procurement exercise will be initiated shortly and contracts will be awarded before the end of the year.

Employability support is vital in times of economic uncertainty and, as such, we will extend the provision of the Welsh Government existing programmes to ensure that there is appropriate provision available in the interim period. This will include React, Job Growth Wales, Access, Traineeships and the Employability Skills Programme which will operate in full until the new programme is live.

Key programmes such as React and Jobs Growth Wales have played a vital role during previous times of uncertainty for the labour market in Wales.  They provide continuity and benefit from a deeper understanding of the Welsh Government core employability offer across Wales and will be important in helping us through these next few months.

I will continue to keep members fully updated on this important work.