

**Senedd Cymru**

**Y Pwyllgor Cydraddoldeb a Chyfiawnder Cymdeithasol**

**Ymchwiliad:** Deddf Llesiant Cenedlaethau'r Dyfodol (Cymru) 2015

**Ymateb gan:** TUC Cymru

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**Welsh Parliament**

**Equality and Social Justice Committee**

**Inquiry:** Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

**Evidence from:** TUC Cymru



## **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015: Post-legislative scrutiny**

Senedd Equality and Social Justice Committee

Deadline: 20 June 2025

### **About TUC Cymru**

TUC Cymru is the voice of Wales at work.

We're creating a Wales where everyone has a voice through their union and an income they can build a life on. We believe that every worker has the right to be safe, valued and respected.

When workers act collectively, we have the power to create positive change in society. We bring workers together through 48 unions to fight for better jobs and a more equal and prosperous country.

1, Cathedral Road, Cardiff, CF11 9SD

[www.tuc.org.uk/wales](http://www.tuc.org.uk/wales)

### **To what extent are the Act's objectives being achieved?**

#### **Well-being economy**

With regard to the Future Generations Act objective that Wales should become a well-being economy, TUC Cymru believes that there is more work to be done.

Rates of poverty in Wales remain high. According to a new report by the Bevan Foundation:

“Poverty in Wales is deeper, more persistent, and more entrenched than in the UK as a whole. After housing costs, 21% of the Welsh population lives in relative poverty<sup>1</sup>. Although this is only slightly above the UK average of 20%, the disparity is particularly stark in the lives of children: 31% of children in Wales grow up in relative income poverty, compared to 29% across the UK<sup>1</sup>.”

This might lead one to the conclusion that the Future Generation Commissioner's office has failed. However, it is very important to note that public bodies, rather than the Commissioner, are responsible for creating a well-being economy. Working with the UK Government, public bodies need to do more to attract, establish and maintain well-paid and secure employment in all parts of Wales – especially the post-industrial areas.

The revisions to the Future Generations Act made under the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act offer further encouragement to public bodies to create and sustain a well-being economy. The social partnership duty requires public bodies

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<sup>1</sup> [The impact of policy interventions designed to reduce poverty in Wales - Bevan Foundation](#)

to seek consensus with trade unions when setting and delivering well-being objectives. It also requires them to report on these matters. By giving a greater voice to workers and unions in setting well-being objectives, improvements should be seen in the working conditions of workers in the devolved public sector and its suppliers.

There has been a positive start, with the first social partnership reports having been shared with the First Minister and the Social Partnership Council. These reports have set the benchmark for public bodies' engagement with unions on well-being objectives. It will be important to see year-on-year progress on this engagement – and an understanding of the benefits that social partnership brings in developing a well-being economy.

TUC Cymru welcomed an amendment to the Future Generations Act under the Social Partnership Act which changed the prosperous Wales goal so that it now refers to 'fair work', rather than 'decent work'. Now, public bodies are required to design objectives that contribute to fair work, which the Welsh Government defines as:

“work which means workers are fairly rewarded, heard and represented, secure and able to progress in a healthy, inclusive working environment where rights are respected.”

However, the Future Generations Commissioner and Audit Wales have no role in relation to promoting or monitoring compliance with the Social Partnership Act provisions which may result in a low rate of compliance. Therefore there is a case for a stronger role and greater resources for the Social Partnership Council so that it can monitor whether well-being objectives in relation to Fair Work and social partnership have been achieved by public bodies.

### **Involvement and collaboration**

The promotion of social partnership in the revised Future Generations Act complements the five way of working, in particular the emphasis on involvement and collaboration. We warmly welcome trade union and employer involvement in the Welsh government's decision-making. We believe the involvement of social partners improves government decision-making and grants them greater credibility and support.

Some good examples of strong involvement and collaboration under the auspices of social partnership include recent co-operation in policy development between unions, Welsh government and public sector employers in relation to managing the opportunities and risks of AI in the workplace<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.wales/managing-technology-manages-people>

### **Widening list of public bodies**

Trade unions would like the social partnership duty to extend through the entire devolved public sector and we would like to widen the list of public bodies the Future Generations Act covers, such as wholly owned companies, corporate joint committees and health and social care regional partnership boards.

### **Socially responsible procurement duty**

We welcome the socially responsible procurement duty and the additional obligations in relation to major construction contracts and outsourcing services contracts and that the 'socially responsible procurement goals' are based on the well-being and fair work goals. Linking the socially responsible procurement goals to the fair work goal will be critical to delivering fair work outcomes from procurement spend, as will requiring the in-scope public bodies to set and publish objectives on how it will achieve the socially responsible procurement goals. We welcome the fact that – despite delays - new procurement regulations linked to the Social Partnership Act will soon be published.