

# [Reshaping employability support: a new employability delivery plan](#)

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## Reshaping employability support

Julie James, Minister for Skills and Science, is due to make an oral Statement on Employability on [Tuesday 11 July 2017](#). The Welsh Government's [Programme for Government, Taking Wales Forward](#), includes a commitment to reshape employability support for job ready individuals and for those furthest away from the labour market.

[The Welsh Government says](#) that its plans to deliver this commitment will be outlined in this Statement:

The Statement will also outline the cross-Welsh Government approach required to deliver this, recognising that employability is not just about jobs and skills, it is about getting every aspect of Government policy – education, health, housing, communities, – working together to support people into sustainable jobs.





## A new all-age employability plan

In a [previous statement on Employability Support on 5 July 2016](#), Julie James announced that, from April 2018, a new, all-age employability programme, would bring together the activities from the main, previous Welsh Government employability programmes including: Jobs Growth Wales, ReAct, Traineeships etc.

We outlined in our manifesto that we would create a new employability programme to support individuals of all ages to find good quality employment. We want this support to be tailored to individual need and, where appropriate, aligned with emerging job opportunities in local communities. Our aim is to bring together the activities from our main employability programmes, Jobs Growth Wales and ReAct, traineeships and our new Employability Skills programme into a single employability support programme that will better meet the needs of those requiring support to gain, retain, and progress within work.



In her Statement, the Minister recognised that the current suite of programmes can be overly complex and fragmented; that a coherent pathway and progression for the learner is sometimes difficult; and that support can be inflexible and not responsive to the needs of the individual.

There are also broader changes to policy at UK level, which will have a significant impact on the delivery of skills training for unemployed people in Wales. The Minister said that the introduction of the Department for Work and Pensions' new Work and Health Programme in 2017:

presents an opportunity to more effectively align the breadth of employment support on offer to individuals across Wales. Our active involvement in the commissioning of this new contract will ensure that lessons are learned from current Work Programme delivery and that the needs of the Welsh labour market as a whole are incorporated in future programme design. This new programme will be significantly smaller than DWP's existing Work Programme and will mean a greater volume of individuals seeking to access Welsh Government support.

The Minister said the new programme will be informed by evaluations of the Work Ready, Jobs Growth Wales and ReAct programmes, the Skills Conditionality pilots, which they conducted with Department for Work and Pensions, and the Traineeships evaluation and review.

The Minister elaborated further on the scope of the support in an [Oral Statement, 15 November 2016](#):

However, we know that it is not enough to focus only on getting people into work. There is a need to ensure that individuals gain decent and sustainable employment and that they progress into, and within, secure jobs. Although entering into employment is a key factor in reducing poverty, it is also important to recognise the growing issue of in-work poverty in Wales. There are now more households living in poverty where someone is working, than not.

The Minister outlined some other key priorities for the new plan including:



- An all-age and a holistic approach, including bespoke and intensive support that is tailored to the needs of individuals in order to increase employability and address barriers;
- a continuum of support to individuals once they access the workplace, particularly for those vulnerable to dropping out of employment;
- an integrated employability approach, linking skills initiatives with employment services and with other public services for example health services to support people with health conditions at the earliest possible opportunity to access or remain in work;
- the importance of working with employers to fully integrate Welsh Government business support and procurement levers within their wider employability approach;
- a systematic approach to identifying need and to referral to employability support through a new employment advice service; and the introduction and expansion of digital employability services;
- incentives for the creation of more targeted job opportunities for disadvantaged individuals and premiums on support in particularly disadvantaged areas;
- working as a co-partner with the Department for Work and Pensions to embed their programmes within the wider Welsh employability agenda and also working as a co-designer of the DWP work and health programme in Wales to improve integration of the programmes.

Most recently, on [28 June 2017](#), Julie James told Members:

So, we're developing an employability delivery plan for Wales, and I'll be saying more about this in the coming weeks. I'm going to resist the temptation to pre-announce my announcement. But, we'll be bringing together the information we have on existing Welsh Government-funded employability programmes to consider what needs to change to meet the employment, skills and support needs of people who are unemployed, economically inactive . . . or those in lower quality jobs who need to be upskilled.

The Welsh Government is also currently undertaking a public consultation on [A reformed post-compulsory education and training system](#), which includes



proposals to create a new Tertiary Education and Research Commission for Wales. See our [blog article on 16 June 2017](#) for the background leading up that consultation.

The consultation proposes that the key functions of the Commission include the strategic planning of education and skills delivery across all post-compulsory education and training in Wales; as well as funding, contracting, quality, financial monitoring and audit of, amongst other sectors, relevant employability and employer-led programmes.

### How to find out more

To find out exactly what the Welsh Government's new employability approach and delivery plan will include, watch [Senedd TV](#) live on Tuesday afternoon or check the Assembly's [Record of Proceedings](#) a day or so later.

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Article by [Anne Thomas](#), National Assembly for Wales Research Service.

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