

# One Public Service Leadership in Wales

High Level Plan

*April 2026*

## The role of Government

### The next Government should:

- Set a small but ambitious number of clear outcome-focussed missions
- Act as a convener and enabler alongside policy issuing
- Create the conditions for cross-boundary collaboration and accountability
- Remove systemic blockers to innovation and experimental learning

In order to move beyond aspiration, the following should be addressed:

### Immediate Actions (0-12 months)

- Review funding structures to identify incentives and levers for collaboration
- Design cross-sector mission-based funding architecture
- Pilot shared outcome targets across 2-3 cross-cutting issues
- Introduce co-designed performance measures and indicators
- Develop shared and consistent internal and external communication plans highlighting activity, progress and achievements
- Create leadership challenge and experimentation solution-focussed fora

## Medium-term Shifts (2-5 years)

- Reform performance frameworks to prioritise shared outcomes
- Embed shared accountability across organisations
- Align inspection and regulatory frameworks with One Public Service principles

## Building a learning Public Service

Wales can become a learning public service system.

### This includes:

- Radical transparency as a governance principle
- Publishing trade-offs and constraints openly
- Working in the open across organisations
- Consistent internal and external communication plans that highlight activity and achievements
- Embedding evaluation from the outset
- Embracing failure as a learning opportunity as opposed to a reason not to pursue an outcome

## Immediate Actions

- Establishing cross-sector learning fora for shared missions
- Introduce protected space for senior leaders to experiment
- Commission independent learning partners to capture and disseminate insight, provide honest brokerage, high support and challenge

## Leadership expectations and incentives

The next Government should:

- Define the leadership behaviours required for One Public Service
- Align recruitment and progression pathways with those behaviours
- Create high support, high challenge environments
- Address entrenched behaviours where necessary

### This includes:

- Reverse mentoring and intergenerational leadership
- Cross-sector secondments
- Explicit leadership standards, behaviour and attributes tied to collaboration and impact

- Communication of progress, challenge and open learning
- Consequences where leaders consistently undermine system intent

## Embed citizen experience as a core metric

### Public trust will only increase when:

- Citizens feel tangible improvements
- People feel involved in decisions
- Services are transparent about trade-offs
- Experience is valued alongside outcomes

### Actions:

- Co-design outcome measures with citizens
- Introduce “experience metrics” alongside performance data
- Use digital and participatory platforms to surface priority issues
- Create visible feedback loops, including communicating clearly how citizen feedback has influenced decisions and service design

## Governance for systems thinking

### To avoid programmatic shift, the next Government should:

- Frame challenges as shared problem spaces
- Convene actors early in the problem definition stage
- Ensure multi-level representation (local, regional, national)
- Avoid solution-first collaboration and begin with a co-designed challenge position

### This could include:

- Mission-based governance structures
- Time-limited cross-sector task groups
- Ensure shared missions are supported by visible communication of activity, progress and achievements across organisations

## In practical terms

### To move this into practical action, this would mean developing:

- A One Public Service Maturity Model
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- A “From > To” framework for organisational reflection/assessment
- A practical implementation toolkit
- A new Leadership Development offer that includes shared tools, such as a common 360 tool specific to the Welsh Public Service
- The introduction of a series of ‘experimentation labs’ where ‘thorny’ challenges are worked through with a focus on commitment, implementation and delivering at pace.