



# Rebuilding Trust, Re-imagining Partnership: WAST's Bold Step Forward

**In a bold move to reset relationships and rebuild trust, the Welsh Ambulance Services University NHS Trust (WAST) has redefined what partnership working looks like.**

During 2022, after navigating challenging relationships for a number of years which threatened to spill over to dispute, WAST engaged ACAS support to produce a report on recommendations to improve relationships.

An action plan of activities was developed including a development programme which brought together trade union partners and managers, from executive leaders to frontline locality managers.

The programme didn't just tick boxes, it invited participants to "walk in each other's shoes," using immersive role-play and reflective storytelling to spark empathy, laughter, and honest dialogue. The result? A cultural shift – which supported developing and strengthening relationships.

This wasn't a one-off. The approach relies on established structures, senior and regional partnership forums, leadership forums, and collaborative task-and-finish groups where issues are tackled early and constructively. Leaders and trade union partners feel empowered to engage with each other in a spirit of mutual respect and cooperation.

The impact was on full display at the recent WAST Social Partnership Conference, where the initiative was celebrated as a standout example of how courageous leadership and shared purpose can drive real change. It's a living, breathing model of Social Partnership, one that's not only delivering results, but setting a new standard for collaboration across Wales.

