

Dadansoddi ar gyfer Polisi



Analysis for Policy



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Social research number: 36/2026

Publication date: 12/03/2026

Evaluability assessment for the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act

Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.

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Evaluability assessment for the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act

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Full Research Report: Findlay, S. and Curless, G. (2026). Evaluability assessment for the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act. Cardiff: Welsh Government, GSR report number 36/2026.

Available at: <https://www.gov.wales/evaluability-assessment-social-partnership-and-public-procurement-wales-act>

Views expressed in this report are those of the researcher and not necessarily those of the Welsh Government

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Glossary

AI

Artificial Intelligence

IRP

Internal Research Programme

SPC

Social Partnership Council

SPD

Social Partnership Duty

SPEFW

Social Partnership, Employability and Fair Work division

The Act

Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act 2023

The WFG Act

Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

ToC

Theory of Change

1. Introduction and background

In March 2025, the Social Partnership, Employability and Fair Work division (SPEFW, Welsh Government) commissioned the Internal Research Programme (Knowledge and Analytical Services, Welsh Government) to conduct an evaluability assessment of the social partnership and fair work elements of the [Social Partnership and Public Procurement \(Wales\) Act 2023](#) (the Act).

The evaluability assessment includes the Social Partnership Duty (SPD), Social Partnership Council (SPC), and fair work elements of the Act. The socially responsible public procurement element is not included.

1.1. Information about the Act

The Act fulfils a [Programme for Government \(2021 to 2026\) commitment](#) to place social partnerships on a statutory footing in Wales. The Act provides a framework which aims to enhance the well-being of people in Wales by improving public services through social partnership working, promoting fair work, and socially responsible public procurement.

Social partnership is described as a ‘Welsh way’ of working, with partnership and collaboration encouraged by Welsh Government since devolution ([Social Partnership: user Handbook, 2025](#)).

The Act is designed to complement existing legislation including the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#) (the WFG Act) and the Socio-economic Duty in [part 1 of the Equality Act 2010 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#).

The following sub-sections provide further detail on the Act’s main provisions.

1.1.1. Social Partnership Duty (SPD)

1.1.1.1. Context

The Act's [explanatory memorandum](#) describes social partnership as a way of working which aims to achieve mutually agreed outcomes, to the benefit of all involved groups. It also highlights five 'social partnership principles', which capture behaviours that reflect successful social partnership working. The principles are cooperation, respect, trust, voice and participation, and mutual gains.

The explanatory memorandum also highlights that in aiming to improve well-being, the Act aligns with the WFG Act. The WFG Act outlines [seven well-being goals](#). It places a [well-being duty](#) on public bodies, which outlines that public bodies must carry out sustainable development. Sustainable development is the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the well-being goals. Sustainable development must include public bodies setting and publishing well-being objectives that maximise contribution to the well-being goals and taking reasonable steps to meet these objectives.

The [sustainable development principle](#) is defined as acting in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. There are 5 ways of working (collaboration, integration, involvement, long-term, and prevention).

The Act's explanatory memorandum outlines that the intention of the Act is to complement these 5 ways of working by introducing social partnership as an essential way that public bodies should work. It is also noted that the social partnership way of working can improve how public bodies set and deliver their well-being objectives.

As stated in the explanatory memorandum, the purpose of the SPD 'is to improve the economic, social, cultural and environmental well-being of people in Wales by strengthening the role of social partnership within strategic decision making'.

1.1.1.2. Provisions

The SPD is set out in [part 2 of the Act \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#), and includes a SPD on public bodies and Welsh Ministers.

The SPD on public bodies came into force on 1st April 2024. The public bodies are those [listed under section 6\(1\) of the WFG Act \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#). Historically this was 48 public bodies, but as of June 2024 8 further public bodies were listed, meaning (excluding Welsh Government) there are 55 public bodies subject to the SPD.

Section 16 of the Act requires that public bodies, in so far as is reasonable, seek consensus or compromise with its recognised trade unions or other representatives of its staff (where there is no recognised trade union) when setting well-being objectives under section 3(2)(a) of the WFG Act. Also, when making decisions of a strategic nature about the reasonable steps they intend to take to deliver those objectives under section 3(2)(b) of the WFG Act.

Section 16 also sets out that to seek consensus or compromise, trade unions or other representatives of staff should be consulted during the process of setting objectives or making decisions at a formative stage, and by providing sufficient information and sufficient time throughout to consider the proposals and respond.

Section 18 of the Act outlines that public bodies must prepare for each financial year a report of what is has done to comply with the SPD. This report must be agreed with recognised trade unions or other representatives of staff or include a statement about why it was not agreed. The report must then be published and submitted to the SPC. There is no specific template for this report, nor a specific deadline beyond as soon as is reasonable after the end of the financial year (31st March).

The SPD on Welsh Ministers also came into force on 1st April 2024 and is set out in sections 17 and 19 of the Act. Section 17 outlines that Welsh Ministers must consult with the SPC when making decisions of a strategic nature about the reasonable steps they are taking (under section 3(2)(b) of the WFG Act) to meet their well-being objectives (set under section 3(2)(a) of the WFG Act). Section 19 outlines that Welsh Ministers must prepare for each financial year a report of what they have done to comply with the SPD. This report must be published, agreed with the SPC or include a statement about why it was not agreed. It must also be laid before the Senedd. Again, there is no specific template or deadline for the report.

1.1.2. Social Partnership Council (SPC)

1.1.2.1. Context

The explanatory memorandum highlights that social partnerships fall into two types of arrangements. One is bipartite, which includes representatives of employers and trade unions. The other is tripartite which includes representatives of employers, trade unions and Welsh Government. Existing social partnership arrangements are noted, such as the retail forum and social care forum. However, a lack of co-ordination or a common framework across arrangements is cited.

The Act includes setting up a national cross-sector forum; the SPC. The explanatory memorandum states the purpose of the SPC's advice is to improve "public services and the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales." (paragraph 46). The SPC element of the Act also seeks to strengthen the role of social partnerships in strategic advice and demonstrate good practice and leadership regarding the social partnership way of working.

1.1.2.2. Provisions

The SPC is set out in [part 1 of the Act \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#), and came into force on the 29th July 2023 (excluding the procurement subgroup). It is a tripartite statutory advisory body with representatives from Welsh Government, workers, and employers. There are 9 worker and 9 employer representatives. Employer and worker representatives must include those across the following sectors: public bodies, private, voluntary, higher education, and further education.

The Act also sets out the appointment process. Members must be appointed by the First Minister. For worker representatives, the First Minister must seek nominations from TUC Cymru (the body representing trade unions in Wales). For employer representatives, the First Minister must seek nominations from persons or bodies that represent the sector categories. Members are appointed for 3 years (except for termination or resignation). The first members were appointed in December 2023.

The [quorum and procedures](#) for the SPC have been published by Welsh Ministers as per the Act. The first SPC meeting was held on 1st February 2024.

The SPC may provide information and advice to Welsh Ministers regarding:

- the SPD on public bodies and Welsh Ministers
- public bodies' pursuit of the 'A prosperous Wales' well-being goal when carrying out sustainable development under the WFG Act
- socially responsible public procurement

This may either be on the SPC's own accord, or by request made by Welsh Ministers.

The Act also states that the SPC may establish subgroups, which must be chaired by a member of the SPC. There is also a requirement to form a public procurement subgroup, with its own quorum and procedures, and composition guidance, published by Welsh Ministers. The procurement subgroup may provide information and advice on the socially responsible public procurement elements of the Act (part 3) in relation to contracting authorities and Welsh Ministers. If Welsh Ministers request this information or advice, the SPC must seek the information or advice from the subgroup. This can be revised by the SPC.

1.1.3. Fair work

The principle of fair work is reflected in the [Programme for Government \(2021 to 2026\)](#) commitment to “Build an economy based on the principles of fair work, sustainability and the industries and services of the future”.

The Welsh Government adopted the definition of fair work set out in the [Fair Work Wales report](#) (Fair Work Commission, 2019), which is “where workers are fairly rewarded, heard and represented, secure and able to progress in a healthy, inclusive environment where rights are respected.” There are 6 characteristics within this definition with associated indicators of good practice, which are:

- fair reward, including; pay, terms and conditions, pensions, and wider benefits
- employee voice and collective representation, including; knowledge of rights, ability to raise concerns, collective bargaining
- security and flexibility, including; working hours, job security
- opportunity for access, growth and progression, including; inclusive, open and fair opportunities to develop and progress, access to training
- safe, healthy and inclusive working environment, including; policies, working environment, working patterns, anti-bullying and discrimination procedures
- legal rights are respected and given substantive effect, including; importance given to legal rights and not seeking to circumvent these

The principle of fair work spans both devolved and reserved matters. This means alongside the Act (which applies to public bodies and Welsh Ministers only), Welsh Government use other policy levers to promote fair work across sectors in Wales.

Fair work within the Act is limited to replacing ‘decent work’ with ‘fair work’ in the description of the ‘A prosperous Wales’ well-being goal (within section 4 of the WFG Act). This (in part 2 of the Act) came into force on 1st April 2024. The explanatory memorandum sets out that this change means that public bodies under the WFG Act (and so the SPD, including Welsh Ministers) will need to consider ‘fair work’ when pursuing the ‘A prosperous Wales’ well-being goal, through setting their well-being objectives and reporting on progress. This aligns with the [Fair Work Wales report](#) (Fair Work Commission, 2019) recommendation to incorporate fair work into the well-being objectives set by public bodies under the WFG Act.

1.1.4. Socially responsible public procurement

1.1.4.1. Context

As per the explanatory memorandum, there are a “large number of policy expectations placed on procurement activity”.

Procurement legislation includes the [UK Procurement Act 2023 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#). Related legislation also includes the Socio-economic Duty. When making decisions of a strategic nature, public bodies must have “due regard to the desirability of exercising them in a way that is designed to reduce the inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage.” (further information is at [the Socio-economic Duty: statutory guidance, Welsh Government, 2025](#)). Strategic decisions include major procurement and commissioning decisions.

Welsh Government also have the voluntary ‘[code of practice: ethical employment in supply chains](#)’ (2017). In signing up organisations agree to 12 commitments, and it is expected those receiving public sector funding sign up. There is also procurement guidance and model contract terms included in the ‘[Workforce \(two-tier\) code of practice](#)’ (2014).

As outlined in the explanatory memorandum, the Act aims to require contracting authorities to show commitment to the procurement policy agenda, provide clarity on policy expectations, support delivery of outcomes through contract management, ensure outcomes link to the WFG Act well-being goals, and improve accountability and transparency.

The purpose of the duties within the Act are so “that socially responsible outcomes are given greater prominence in procurement, and considered carefully as part of a more holistic and long-term definition of value for money.”

1.1.4.2. Provisions

Socially responsible public procurement is set out in [part 3 of the Act \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#). Contracting authorities set out in the Act must take account of social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being in procurement.

This includes a statutory duty on contracting authorities to carry out public procurement in a socially responsible way. They must set and publish socially responsible procurement objectives, and reasonable steps to meet these, in contribution to achieving the well-being goals under the WFG Act. This must be included in a procurement strategy.

There are also two contract management duties. Welsh Ministers must publish ‘model social public works clauses’ for major construction contracts. Welsh Ministers must also publish a ‘public services outsourcing and workforce code’ about employment and pensions matters related to outsourcing services contracts, which will include ‘model social public workforce clauses’. Contracting authorities must include those clauses it considers should be included and ensure these are implemented.

The Act also specifies that annual socially responsible procurement reports must be produced by contracting authorities where activity has been undertaken. Section 39 of the Act outlines the areas to be included in the report, including regulations made by Welsh Ministers that must be published, which will detail the information contracting authorities must collect and report. Welsh Ministers must also produce an annual report for public procurement in Wales.

Section 43 of the Act outlines that Welsh Ministers may issue guidance in relation to socially responsible public procurement.

At the time of the research, the socially responsible procurement provisions are expected to fully come into force in April 2026.

1.2. Research context

In chapter 11 of the [explanatory memorandum](#), it is stated that Welsh Ministers intend to lay before the Senedd a report on the operation and effect of the Act. This report will include a formal evaluation by externally commissioned researchers.

In 2023, the [IRP produced a Theory of Change \(ToC\)](#) for the Act in consultation with stakeholders. This describes why the Act is necessary and what it aims to achieve, and maps the Act's inputs, activities, outputs and outcomes. The ToC consists of four individual logic models which cover the Act's provisions: the SPC, the SPD, fair work and socially responsible public procurement. The ToC also highlighted barriers or risks to implementation. The report also began to map monitoring data relevant to the outcomes of the fair work logic model.

As the ToC was developed while the Act was still at the bill stage, and so before the provisions came into force, it provides an assessment of pre-Act conditions from which progress or change can be measured.

The ToC constituted the first step in the development of a framework for future evaluation work. As outlined in the Act's explanatory memorandum, it was suggested "As a systematic approach to developing evaluation projects, an evaluability assessment could be undertaken as an early step in the post implementation review process. Building on the theory of change analysis, an evaluability assessment would establish the likelihood of measurable impact in the areas of interest before resources are committed to a full-scale evaluation. The assessment would include initial baseline information from a review of existing data sources and recommendations for and against different evaluative approaches, based on evidence requirements." (Paragraph 468).

An evaluability assessment is broadly defined as "The extent to which an activity or project can be evaluated in a reliable and credible fashion" (as per '[Better Evaluation](#)', cited from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development-Development Assistance Committee).

In terms of the policy context for an evaluation, it is the intention of the Act that through the combination of social partnership (amplifying worker voice in public policy) and the socially responsible procurement actions (harnessing Wales's procurement power) that the delivery of a fair work nation is supported. For these reasons the policy rationale is that an evaluation needs to consider all elements of the Act together.

1.3. Research aims

The remit of this research is to undertake an evaluability assessment of the social partnership and fair work aspects of the Act. Procurement is not included in this evaluability assessment due to internal resource, as provisions were coming into force and guidance was being developed at the time this research was commissioned.

The intended use is to inform the tender specification for externally commissioning a formal evaluation of the Act (as per the explanatory memorandum). The IRP (with input from SPEFW officials) developed research aims and specific research questions within each aim.

Aim 1a is to understand the progress of the social partnership and fair work aspects of the Act. The research will consider:

- how the SPC has developed since it was established in February 2024 and how the SPD has embedded since April 2024; including progress made regarding the inputs, activities and outputs from the 2023 logic models
- whether there has been any systematic progress monitoring

Aim 1b is to refine the relevant logic models accordingly. The research will consider what aspects of the relevant logic models have stayed the same, and what have changed. This includes inputs, activities, outputs and outcomes, and links between them. This also includes consideration of risks and contextual factors.

Aim 2 is to understand the availability and quality of primary and secondary data that can evidence components stated in the ToC. The research will consider:

- what the sources of secondary data are that may evidence the implementation of activities, outputs, and outcomes
- which activities, outputs and outcomes cannot be evidenced by secondary data, and what primary data may be required to provide evidence of delivery and impact
- what issues may be anticipated with evidencing activities, outputs and outcomes, such as: the degree of attribution (taking account of the wider system and contextual factors), baselining, quality of evidence, and evidence gaps
- how anticipated issues can be mitigated or accepted in an evaluation approach

Aim 3 is to outline and provide advice and options for evaluation design. The research will consider:

- what the enablers and constraints are on a programme of evaluation, including the design (aim 1), data assessment (aim 2) and organisational factors including time (which includes the timing of the evaluation), budget, expertise, capacity and ethics
- what the feasible options for a programme of evaluation are, including process and impact, taking into account the enablers and constraints
- what the high-level considerations are for evaluating the impact of the social partnership elements of the Act in a cohesive manner with the impact of the socially responsible procurement elements of the Act

2. Methodology

To satisfy the research aims, the methods included desk reviews of documentation and workshops with stakeholders at different stages of the research.

The development of the research aims and methods was informed by the working paper [‘Planning evaluability assessments: a synthesis of the literature with recommendations’](#) (Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, 2013).

This paper outlines that evaluability assessments should consider evaluability in principle and in practice and the likely usefulness of an evaluation. It contains a checklist divided by three areas an evaluability assessment should cover, which are:

- programme design, including considering the ToC and to what extent this could be evaluated based on dimensions such as clarity and complexity (evaluability ‘in principle’)
- information and data availability, including understanding its quality, and degree of attribution to the programme (evaluability ‘in practice’)
- institutional context, which explores practicalities including the resources available for evaluation, stakeholder involvement, evaluation timing, and ethical considerations (evaluability ‘in practice’, and utility)

2.1. Stage 1, reviewing the logic models and ToC

2.1.1. Document review

The IRP worked with SPEFW officials to identify documents regarding the set up and operation of the SPD, SPC and fair work elements of the Act. This was to capture processes and progress since the provisions came into force. Examples of documentation include ministerial advice, guidance to organisations, SPC meeting minutes, and published public body reports on compliance with the SPD.

The IRP used this documentation to conduct an initial review of the SPD, SPC and fair work logic models produced in the [‘Social Partnership and Public Procurement \(Wales\) Act: Theory of Change’ report \(2023\)](#). This highlighted potential gaps, out of date components, or areas that needed clarification.

2.1.2. Workshops

The IRP worked with SPEFW officials to identify Welsh Government officials to participate in workshops to review the 2023 SPD, SPC and fair work logic models. The agreed approach was to include officials across both strategic and delivery roles involved in development and implementation. The workshops aimed to capture wide ranging views, to critically reflect on the existing logic models.

Microsoft Whiteboard was used to visualise the 2023 logic models for the workshops. Gaps, amendments and clarification questions that arose in the document review were reflected on the whiteboards.

Three workshops were held, one for each of the logic models. Each had a topic guide. The topic guides spanned inputs to outcomes, which covered the specific questions that arose from the document review, and general questions about any other changes or gaps participants identified in the logic models. Due to timings, risks were discussed in the SPC workshop only and context was discussed in the fair work workshop only.

The SPD workshop lasted around 1 hour. There were 10 attendees. Participants represented varied business areas including the SPC secretariat, social partnership engagement, trade union secondees, local government and the WFG Act.

The SPC workshop lasted around 1 hour 30 minutes. There were 10 attendees, mostly the same attendees from the SPD workshop. One attendee was different than the SPD workshop; the local government business area was not represented in the SPC workshop.

The fair work workshop lasted around 1 hour 30 minutes, with 4 people invited of which all attended. The business areas represented were the SPC secretariat, fair work, procurement and the WFG Act.

During all workshops the Microsoft Teams recording and transcription function was used. Agreement to do so was sought from all participants at the start of the workshops. The transcripts were checked for accuracy against the recordings.

The transcripts were then reviewed separately by two researchers within the IRP, to identify changes to the SPD, SPC and fair work logic models to reflect workshop feedback. Changes were discussed and agreed between the two researchers. A third researcher then reviewed these changes. All researchers were those involved in the facilitation of the workshops.

The revised logic models were sent via email to Welsh Government officials for further comment, including those who attended any of the workshops or who were invited but could not attend.

2.2. Stage 2, understanding the data and evaluation practicalities

2.2.1. Data and information workshop

Due to the nature of the concepts within the Act, the resulting logic models at stage 1 contained many outcomes with higher-level concepts. Therefore, the agreed approach was to use stage 2 to further define these outcomes, breaking down the concepts into specific measurable elements. In doing so, to then consider how these elements could be measured and any possible challenges. It was anticipated this could uncover further logic model changes. As such, it was agreed the workshop participants would be Welsh Government officials only.

The IRP worked with SPEFW officials to identify the Welsh Government officials to participate in the workshop regarding data and information. This included the same business areas as the logic model workshops: the SPC secretariat, social partnership engagement, trade union secondees and the WFG Act. This also included representatives from the statistics and economist professions.

One half-day workshop was held comprising three sessions, one for each of the SPD, SPC and fair work. The topic guide covered a selection of short-, medium- and long-term outcomes. It was not possible to cover all outcomes in the time, so the more conceptual outcomes or those where measurement may be more difficult were prioritised. The broad areas of questioning included:

- what the outcomes would look like in practice
- what data or information is currently collected, or what new data or information might be needed
- what the challenges are for evaluation and data collection
- what contextual factors may limit attribution

The workshop was held in person with the option to attend online. The SPD session lasted around 1 hour 30 minutes, with the SPC and fair work sessions lasting around 1 hour each. The SPD session had 13 attendees, with 11 for the SPC and 10 for fair work. Most participants attended in person.

2.2.2. Practicalities workshop

To ascertain the ‘institutional context’ element of an evaluability assessment, a workshop was held with three senior leaders in Welsh Government across social partnership, fair work and procurement. The workshop was held on Microsoft Teams and lasted for around 1 hour.

A topic guide was developed, in which the broad areas of questioning were:

- potential uses of an evaluation, internally and externally
- which elements of the Act would be included within an evaluation
- the timing of an evaluation
- the budget for an evaluation
- the capacity of stakeholders to engage in evaluation activity

2.2.3. Analysis of data from stage 2 workshops

During all workshops the Microsoft Teams recording and transcription function was used. For the hybrid data workshop, a Dictaphone was also used in the room. Agreement to record was sought from all participants at the start of the workshops. The transcripts were checked for accuracy against the recordings.

The transcripts for each section of the data workshop were reviewed by researchers from the IRP. This included 1 researcher who was not involved in the data workshop. Data was extracted to define outcomes and identify what data exists currently and what new data might be required. Also, what challenges a future evaluation might encounter, including attribution issues. This included applying findings to the outcomes that were not discussed in the workshop. Where there was still a gap, SPEFW officials were asked for views via email. Each researcher’s analysis was reviewed by the other for quality assurance.

Further potential changes to the outcomes in the logic model were also noted through the data workshop analysis process. Changes to the logic models were discussed and agreed between the two researchers. The revised logic models were sent via email to SPEFW officials for further comment and agreement.

For the practicalities workshop, 1 IRP researcher extracted data which were relevant to the topic guide’s broad themes, including scope, timing, budget, stakeholders’ capacity, and risks. This analysis was then checked by another IRP researcher against the workshop transcript. Both researchers were involved in the practicalities workshop.

2.3. Stage 3, considering evaluation options

To identify suitable evaluation options for a future evaluation, IRP researchers reviewed [HM Treasury's Magenta Book](#) and [resources from Better Evaluation](#) independently of each other. Evaluation approaches were firstly included for consideration based their applicability to the future evaluation's aims, likely data collection methods, and context and constraints based on findings from stages 1 and 2. This left a set of remaining approaches, for which further information and strengths and weaknesses was gathered. Three IRP researchers then discussed the remaining approaches and reached agreement as to which option and methods would be most suitable.

2.4. Methodology considerations

A limitation of the research is that external stakeholders (such as public body representatives and SPC members) were not included in workshops. Therefore, their views about what data and information is held and what is feasible are not reflected.

3. Theory of change (ToC)

This section contains the Act's logic model diagrams for the SPD, SPC and fair work (Figures 1, 2 and 3). It also outlines the context that shaped the needs and rationale for the Act, an expanded description of certain components of the diagram, and an explanation as to how the different stages of each logic model are connected. It also contains an explanation of the connections between the different logic models.

The logic models are derived from the [ToC that was developed in 2023](#) by the IRP in consultation with stakeholders. The ToC describes what the Act aims to achieve and how this will happen, through mapping inputs, activities, outputs and outcomes. The broad definitions are:

- inputs; the resources needed
- activities; how the inputs are used and the action which needs to occur
- outputs; what is delivered or produced
- outcomes; what changes, in the short term (1 to 2 years), medium term (3 to 4 years) and long term (5 plus years)

For the SPD, SPC and fair work logic models, updates have been made to inputs, activities and outputs due to implementation having started since the 2023 models were developed. So, more detail could be added, and the components could be fine-tuned based on progress. Changes to outcomes have been made to more closely align these components with the Act based on its remit. A full description of what has changed and why has been developed internally, for any future evaluator. The socially responsible public procurement logic model is not under consideration as part of this evaluability assessment and will need to be updated separately.

3.1. Context

3.1.1. Situation and needs

Several inter-linked factors formed the context which shaped the need and rationale for the Act during its development.

There was the wider economic context, which included the economic impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, Brexit, the 'cost of living' crisis, and the industrial relations climate. This presented significant challenges for both the public and private sectors and added complexity in planning for sustainable growth and secure employment.

In terms of social partnership, there were different pre-Act arrangements for the private and public sectors. The private sector had separate arrangements through the Economic Summit where businesses, trade unions and local government leaders met to discuss economic issues and the future of Wales's economy. In the public sector, social partnership arrangements existed on a national basis through the Workforce Partnership Council which has now been superseded by the Public Sector Future Workforce Forum. Sectoral arrangements such as the NHS Welsh Partnership Forum, Schools' Partnership Forum, Devolved Services Group, and the (bipartite) Joint Council for Wales are represented on the Public Sector Future Workforce Forum. Other previous arrangements included the Shadow Social Partnership Council during the COVID-19 pandemic. There was also the Social Partnership Forum, which was a temporary body designed to set up the SPC that involved trade unions, public and private sector employers, and Welsh Government.

Where social partnership models were in operation prior to the Act, there were various issues with how these models functioned. This included different understandings of social partnership across different stakeholders, a lack of agility to respond quickly to issues, and a need to formalise the model because non-statutory forms of social partnership lacked coherence and strategic direction. It was also the case that social partnerships in the public sector did not always work towards achieving consensus consistently nor routinely applied across all public bodies.

Issues of consistency were also evident regarding fair work, where fair work outcomes were understood differently by stakeholders and that not all public bodies in Wales considered fair work in their approach to well-being. Therefore, there was a desire to increase access to, and prevalence of, fair work across Wales. Also, for public bodies to lead by example in promoting fair work as employers, policymakers, and funders and procurers of other organisations. These aims, in turn, created the need:

- to explain and demonstrate the relationship between fair work and well-being
- to provide public bodies in Wales with a framework for promoting fair work within their own organisations and in their work with others
- to build a 'movement' for fair work, encompassing social partners and civic society organisations with the purpose of advocating and 'normalising' fair work

- for Welsh Ministers to promote and pursue fair work in Wales

3.1.2. Relevant legislation and policy

The Act is also shaped by, and sits within, the wider legislative and policy context.

The UK Equality Act (2010) Public Sector Equality Duty requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities. The UK Equality Act also legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and wider society. The Socio-economic Duty also requires public bodies to reduce the inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage when making decisions of a strategic nature.

The Act also complements the WFG Act. The WFG Act requires public bodies' decision-making processes to consider the long-term impact on social, economic, cultural and environmental well-being and improvement to public services. The Act amends section 4 of the WFG Act by substituting 'decent work' with 'fair work' in the 'A prosperous Wales' well-being goal. It brings social partnership into public bodies' decision-making processes when setting well-being objectives and making strategic decisions about steps to achieve these. The SPC can also advise on public bodies' pursuit of the 'A prosperous Wales' goal.

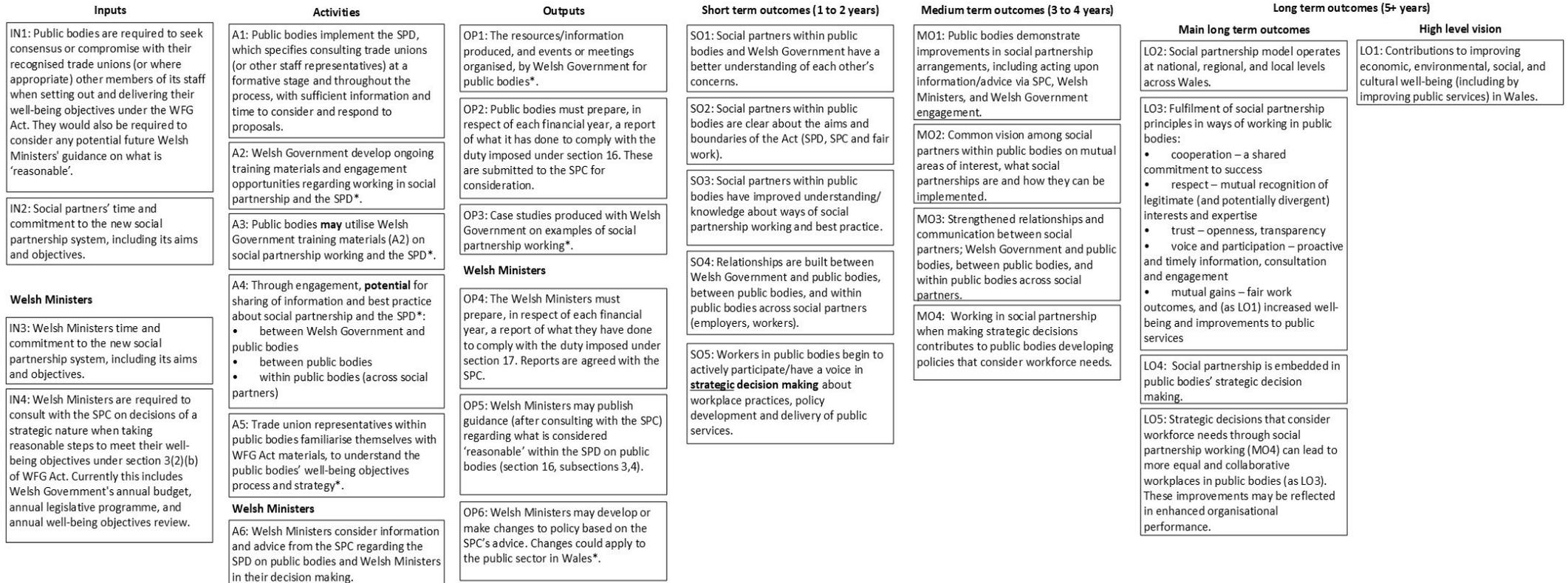
Regarding the fair work component specifically, employment rights and duties and industrial relations is a reserved power. This limits the scope of fair work within the Act. [The 2024 UK Employment Rights Bill \(UK Parliament\)](#), which is expected to receive Royal Assent in late 2025, includes fair work provisions. The bill proposes the creation of a fair work agency, which will bring together some existing enforcement functions to protect workers' rights through enforcement, guidance, and collaboration.

As the power to influence fair work is limited from a statutory perspective in Wales, the fair work component of the Act is also connected to non-statutory Welsh Government policy statements and frameworks. This includes the [Employability and Skills Plan](#) (2022), which champions fair work for all. Also, [the Economic Contract](#), which was launched in 2018 as part of the Economic Action Plan. The Economic Contract is a mutual agreement between Welsh Government and businesses, which commit to responsible practices, such as fair work, in exchange for public support. The Act is also related to Welsh Government's [Economic Mission 2023 to 2025](#), which sets out a vision for a stronger, fairer, and greener economy in accordance with the aims of the WFG Act.

3.2. SPD logic model and chains

Figure 1: SPD logic model

*= activity/output not stipulated within the Act, but is an activity/output that flows from the Act



3.2.1. Additional information for the SPD logic model

Input IN4 is 'Welsh Ministers are required to consult with the SPC on decisions of a strategic nature when taking reasonable steps to meet their well-being objectives under section 3(2)(b) of WFG Act. Currently this includes Welsh Government's annual budget, annual legislative programme, and annual well-being objectives review'. It should be noted that the decision (agreed with the SPC) for Welsh Ministers to consult on decisions for these 3 areas was made under the 2021 to 2026 Senedd term and is therefore subject to change with any new government.

Activity A2 is 'Welsh Government develop ongoing training materials and engagement opportunities regarding working in social partnership and the SPD'. Activity A4 is 'Through engagement, potential for sharing of information and best practice about social partnership and the SPD: between Welsh Government and public bodies, between public bodies, within public bodies (across social partners)'. Examples of the (non-statutory) training and information that could be shared, and engagements, include:

- resources published on the [social partnership webpage](#)
- feedback to social partners based on SPC's review of public bodies' annual SPD reports
- the 'social partner champions network'; which was established in March 2025 and brings together 'champions' from across the public bodies to share resources and identify learnings and network opportunities which champions can then disseminate within their respective organisations
- the Welsh Government 'internal practitioners group', which meets every three months to facilitate social partnership ways of working within Welsh Government

Further examples are likely to develop as implementation progresses, which a future evaluator should capture.

Output OP3 is 'Case studies produced with Welsh Government on examples of social partnership working'. The [social partnership webpage includes case studies](#), and as part of the 'champions network' toolkit the identification of case studies from public bodies is encouraged.

3.2.2. Activities, outputs and short term outcomes chains, SPD

3.2.2.1. 'SO1: Social partners within public bodies and Welsh Government have a better understanding of each other's concerns' and 'SO5: Workers in public bodies begin to actively participate/have a voice in strategic decision making about workplace practices, policy development and delivery of public services'

Firstly, discussing 'OP2: Public Bodies must prepare, in respect of each financial year, a report of what it has done to comply with the duty imposed under section 16. These are submitted to the SPC for consideration'. This is underpinned by activity 'A1: Public bodies implement the SPD, which specifies consulting trade unions (or other staff representatives) at a formative stage and throughout the process, with sufficient information and time to consider and respond to proposals'. This activity in itself is the information that the mandatory annual report (OP2) contains.

OP2 is also connected to 'A3: Public bodies may utilise Welsh Government training materials (A2) on social partnership working and the SPD' and 'A5: Trade union representatives within public bodies familiarise themselves with WFG Act materials, to understand the public bodies' well-being objectives process and strategy'. Within the activities, A5 relates to A1 because trade union understanding of the WFG Act and associated processes within the public body will inform their ability to engage in the setting and delivering of the well-being objectives and so implementing the SPD (A1). Similarly, A3 may inform how public bodies and trade union representatives work together for the purposes of A1. In turn then, A5 and A3 link to OP2 as the way in which the SPD is implemented will be reflected in the report that public bodies produce.

These are the links which then link OP2 to SO1 and SO5. The way in which the SPD is implemented will lead to social partners' understanding of each other's concerns and involvement of worker voices in strategic decisions.

3.2.2.2. 'SO2: Social partners within public bodies are clear about the aims and boundaries of the Act (SPD, SPC and fair work)' and 'SO3: Social partners within public bodies have improved understanding/knowledge about ways of social partnership working and best practice'

Discussing 'OP3: Case studies produced with Welsh Government on examples of social partnership working'. This is underpinned by activities A1, A2 and A4. This is because activity A1 (implementing the SPD) may lead to case studies that Welsh Government develop to showcase social partnership working (A2: Welsh Government develop ongoing training materials and engagement opportunities regarding working in social partnership and the SPD) to then disseminate as best practice (A4: Through engagement, potential for sharing of information and best practice about social partnership and the SPD).

Next discussing 'OP1: The resources/information produced, and events or meetings organised, by Welsh Government for public bodies.' This is linked to activities A2 and A4. Activity A3, which begins with 'Public bodies may utilise Welsh Government training materials (A2)' is also connected OP1. This is because the resources and information produced by Welsh Government (OP1) are the training materials that public bodies can utilise regarding social partnership and the SPD (A3).

Activity 'A6: Welsh Ministers consider information and advice from the SPC regarding the SPD on public bodies and Welsh Ministers in their decision making' is connected to the following outputs:

- OP4: The Welsh Ministers must prepare, in respect of each financial year, a report of what they have done to comply with the duty imposed under section 17. Reports are agreed with the SPC
- OP5: Welsh Ministers may publish guidance (after consulting with the SPC) regarding what is considered 'reasonable' within the SPD on public bodies (section 16, subsections 3,4)
- OP6: Welsh Ministers may develop or make changes to policy based on the SPC's advice. Changes could apply to the public sector in Wales

Activity A2 also relates to A6. This is because information and advice provided to Welsh Ministers by the SPC (A6) can inform the training materials and engagement events developed by Welsh Government (A2) that lead to OP1.

Overall, these are the links which then link OP1, OP3 and OP5 to SO2 and SO3.

3.2.2.3. SO4: Relationships are built between Welsh Government and public bodies, between public bodies, and within public bodies across social partners (employers, workers)

This outcome is not directly linked to an output in itself. It is the result of 'A4: Through engagement, potential for sharing of information and best practice about social partnership and the SPD: between Welsh Government and public bodies, between public bodies, within public bodies (across social partners)'. Also, specifically for 'within public bodies across social partners', underpinned by 'A1: Public bodies implement the SPD'.

3.2.3. Short term outcomes to medium term outcomes chains, SPD

The medium-term outcomes 'MO1: Public bodies demonstrate improvements in social partnership arrangements, including acting upon information/advice via SPC, Welsh Ministers, and Welsh Government engagement' and 'MO2 Common vision among social partners within public bodies on mutual areas of interest, what social partnerships are and how they can be implemented' are linked to the following short-term outcomes:

- SO1: Social partners within public bodies and Welsh Government have a better understanding of each other's concerns
- SO2: Social partners within public bodies are clear about the aims and boundaries of the Act (SPD, SPC and fair work)
- SO3: Social partners within public bodies have improved understanding/knowledge about ways of social partnership working and best practice
- SO4: Relationships are built between Welsh Government and public bodies, between public bodies, and within public bodies across social partners (employers, workers)
- SO5: Workers in public bodies begin to actively participate/have a voice in strategic decision making about workplace practices, policy development and delivery of public services

MO1 and MO2 are an outcome of all the short-term outcomes because the short-term outcomes create the conditions for social partners within public bodies to implement and improve social partnership working.

The outcome 'MO3: Strengthened relationships and communication between social partners; Welsh Government and public bodies, between public bodies, and within public bodies across social partners' is linked to the following short-term outcomes:

- SO1
- SO3
- SO4
- SO5

The medium-term outcome 'MO4: Working in social partnership when making strategic decisions contributes to public bodies developing policies that consider workforce needs' is a product of the short-term outcome SO5.

3.2.4. Medium term outcomes to long term outcomes chains, SPD

The long-term outcomes 'LO2: Social partnership model operates at national, regional, and local levels across Wales' and LO3, which begins with 'Fulfilment of social partnership principles' are linked to:

- MO1: Public bodies demonstrate improvements in social partnership arrangements, including acting upon information/advice via SPC, Welsh Ministers, and Welsh Government engagement
- MO2: Common vision among social partners within public bodies on mutual areas of interest, what social partnerships are and how they can be implemented
- MO3: Strengthened relationships and communication between social partners; Welsh Government and public bodies, between public bodies, and within public bodies across social partners

For LO2, the national, regional and local level is relevant to the SPD. This is because the public bodies which the SPD applies to, and so where social partnership should be operating, are national organisations (for example, Sport Wales, Arts Council Wales), regional (such as Corporate Joint Committees, health boards, fire and rescue, national parks) and local (local authorities).

The long-term outcome 'LO4: Social partnership is embedded in public bodies' strategic decision making' is linked to MO1, particularly on from 'SO5: Workers in public bodies begin to actively participate/have a voice in strategic decision making about workplace practices, policy development and delivery of public services'.

The long-term outcome 'LO5: Strategic decisions that consider workforce needs through social partnership working (MO4) can lead to more equal and collaborative workplaces in public bodies (as LO3). These improvements may be reflected in enhanced organisational performance.' is linked to the medium-term outcome 'MO4: Working in social partnership when making strategic decisions contributes to public bodies developing policies that consider workforce needs'. Also, it links to LO3 which demonstrates what being 'equal and collaborative' looks like.

3.2.5. Within long term outcomes, SPD, high level vision

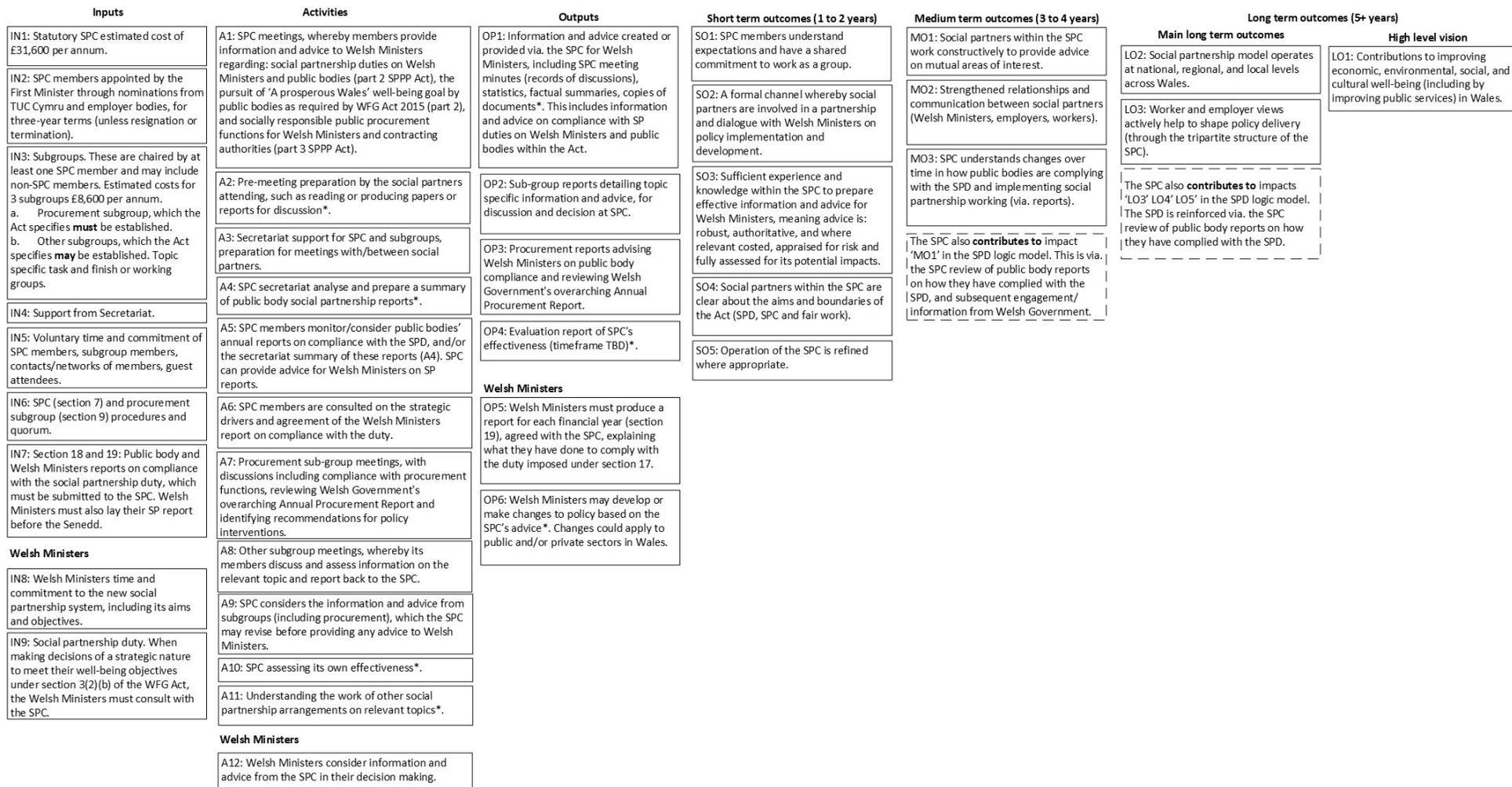
The long-term outcome 'LO1: Contributions to improving economic, environmental, social, and cultural well-being (including by improving public services) in Wales' is the high-level vision for the SPD, meaning it follows on from the main long-term outcomes.

Ultimately LO1 is linked to LO2, LO3 and LO4. By public bodies operating the social partnership model (LO2) in a way that aligns with the principles (LO3) and is embedded in strategic decision making (LO4), this enables contributions to well-being goals.

3.3. SPC logic model and chains

Figure 2: SPC logic model

* = activity/output not stipulated within the Act, but is an activity/output that flows from the Act or creation of the SPC.



3.3.1. Additional information for the SPC logic model

Input IN3 describes the SPC subgroups, including 'other subgroups...topic specific task and finish or working groups.' Currently, the 'other subgroups' that have been established are 'Fair Work in Welsh Government Business Grants', 'Equality Diversity and Inclusion' and 'Artificial Intelligence (AI) skills'. While the fair work and AI subgroups have a specific work programme and aims to make recommendations for the SPC to consider in providing advice to ministers, the equality subgroup is a 'standing group' so will meet ad-hoc to discuss a particular issue. A future evaluator will need to capture all subgroups that have emerged over time.

Activity A1 is 'SPC meetings, whereby members provide information and advice to Welsh Ministers regarding: social partnership duties on Welsh Ministers and public bodies (part 2 SPPP Act), the pursuit of 'A prosperous Wales' well-being goal by public bodies as required by WFG Act 2015 (part 2), and socially responsible public procurement functions for Welsh Ministers and contracting authorities (part 3 SPPP Act).' It should be noted that the for the SPD on Welsh Ministers for the 2021 to 2026 Senedd term, the ministers in partnership with the SPC decided that the SPC would be consulted on the annual budget, legislative programme and well-being objectives. How the SPD on Welsh Ministers is discharged is therefore subject to change with any new government.

3.3.2. Activities, outputs and short term outcomes chains, SPC

3.3.2.1. SO1, SO3 and SO4

SO1, SO3 and SO4 are all about changes in understanding, knowledge and experience. The full wording is:

- SO1: SPC members understand expectations and have a shared commitment to work as a group
- SO3: Sufficient experience and knowledge within the SPC to prepare effective information and advice for Welsh Ministers, meaning advice is: robust, authoritative, and where relevant costed, appraised for risk and fully assessed for its potential impacts
- SO4: Social partners within the SPC are clear about the aims and boundaries of the Act (SPD, SPC and fair work)

Output 1

For activity A1, which begins with 'SPC meetings', several activities sit alongside this when the SPC meetings happen. This includes:

- the work of the SPC secretariat which is captured in activities 'A3: Secretariat support for SPC and subgroups, preparation for meetings with/between social partners' and 'A4: SPC secretariat analyse and prepare a summary of public body social partnership reports'
- the work of SPC members, which is captured in activities 'A2: Pre-meeting preparation by the social partners attending, such as reading or producing papers or reports for discussion' and 'A5: SPC members monitor/consider public bodies' annual reports on compliance with the SPD, and/or the secretariat summary of these reports (A4). SPC can provide advice for Welsh Ministers on SP reports'
- the work of SPC subgroups, which is captured by A7 and A8, and the resulting work of the SPC captured at 'A9: SPC considers the information and advice from subgroups (including procurement), which the SPC may revise before providing any advice to Welsh Ministers'

Together, these activities which relate to the SPC meetings link to output 'OP1: Information and advice created or provided via. the SPC for Welsh Ministers, including SPC meeting minutes (records of discussions), statistics, factual summaries, copies of documents. This includes information and advice on compliance with SP duties on Welsh Ministers and public bodies within the Act'.

OP1 then in turn links to SO1, SO3 and SO4. Through taking part in the SPC, understanding of expectations and commitment to working as a group develops (SO1), experience and knowledge about preparing advice develops (SO3), as well as understanding of the Act's remit (SO4).

Outputs 2 and 3

Activities relating to SPC subgroups link to output 'OP2: Sub-group reports detailing topic specific information and advice, for discussion and decision at SPC.' This includes 'A7: Procurement sub-group meetings, with discussions including compliance with procurement functions, reviewing Welsh Government's overarching Annual Procurement Report and identifying recommendations for policy interventions' and 'A8: Other subgroup meetings, whereby its members discuss and assess information on the relevant topic and report back to the SPC'.

Activity A7, which covers the activities of the SPC's procurement subgroup, is also related to output 'OP3: Procurement reports advising Welsh Ministers on public body compliance and reviewing Welsh Government's overarching Annual Procurement Report'.

OP2 and OP3 in turn link to SO1, SO3 and SO4; through taking part in the subgroups understanding of expectations and commitment to working as a group develops (SO1), experience and knowledge about preparing advice develops (SO3), as well as understanding of the Act's remit (SO4).

Output 4

Activity 'A10: SPC assessing its own effectiveness' is linked to output 'OP4: Evaluation report of SPC's effectiveness'. Workshop participants highlighted this process and the timing at which the SPC would review and report on its own effectiveness is to be determined.

This in turn links to SO1, SO3 and SO4, where SPC members would have a better understanding of the SPC operation, including in relation to its aims (SO1 and SO4), and whether advice provided is meeting the criteria (SO3).

3.3.2.2. SO2: A formal channel whereby social partners are involved in a partnership and dialogue with Welsh Ministers on policy implementation and development

Outputs 1, 2 and 3

SO2 is also linked to OP1, OP2 and OP3 and the associated activities as described; through taking part in the SPC and its subgroups and producing information and advice.

Output 6

The SPC provides information and advice to Welsh Ministers including details of public bodies' reporting on their compliance with the SPD (A5), information and advice based on the work of the SPC's subgroups (A9), and information and advice generated through SPC meetings (A1). As such, these activities together with 'A12: Welsh Ministers consider information and advice from the SPC in their decision making' link to 'OP6: Welsh Ministers may develop or make changes to policy based on the SPC's advice'.

OP1 (SPC information/advice), OP2 (subgroup reports), and OP3 (procurement subgroup reports) also relate, as they outline the information or advice for OP6.

OP6 then links to SO2, where the SPC information and advice could be considered in policy implementation and development.

Output 5

OP5: 'Welsh Ministers must produce a report for each financial year (section 19), agreed with the SPC, explaining what they have done to comply with the duty imposed under section 17' is underpinned by 'A6: SPC members are consulted on the strategic drivers and agreement of the Welsh Ministers report on compliance with the duty.'

This in turn links OP5 to SO2, where the SPC is directly involved in the Welsh Minister's implementation of their SPD.

3.3.2.3. SO5: Operation of the SPC is refined where appropriate

Activity 'A10: SPC assessing its own effectiveness' is linked to output 'OP4: Evaluation report of SPC's effectiveness', which then links to SO5.

3.3.3. Short term outcomes to medium term outcomes chains, SPC

The medium-term outcome 'MO1: Social partners within the SPC work constructively to provide advice on mutual areas of interest' is linked to all the short-term outcomes, because they create the conditions necessary for social partners to work constructively and provide high-quality advice. They are:

- SO1: SPC members understand expectations and have a shared commitment to work as a group
- SO2: A formal channel whereby social partners are involved in a partnership and dialogue with Welsh ministers on policy implementation and development
- SO3: Sufficient experience and knowledge within the SPC to prepare effective information and advice for Welsh Ministers, meaning advice is: robust, authoritative, and where relevant costed, appraised for risk and fully assessed for its potential impacts
- SO4: Social partners within the SPC are clear about the aims and boundaries of the Act (SPD, SPC and fair work)
- SO5: Operation of the SPC is refined where appropriate

The medium-term outcome 'MO2: Strengthened relationships and communication between social partners (Welsh Ministers, employers, workers)', is linked to the following short-term outcomes:

- SO1
- SO2
- SO4

The medium-term outcome 'MO3: SPC understands changes over time in how public bodies are complying with the SPD and implementing social partnership working (via reports)' is linked to the following short-term outcomes:

- SO2
- SO3
- SO4

3.3.4. Medium term outcomes to long term outcomes chains, SPC

The long-term outcome 'LO2: Social partnership model operates at national, regional, and local levels across Wales' is linked to the medium-term outcomes 'MO2: Strengthened relationships and communication between social partners (Welsh Ministers, employers, workers)' and 'MO1: Social partners within the SPC work constructively to provide advice on mutual areas of interest'. The 'national' level applies to the SPC itself, as the SPC is a national structure where the social partnership way of working occurs.

The long-term outcome 'LO3: Worker and employer views actively help to shape policy delivery (through the tripartite structure of the SPC)' is linked to the medium-term outcomes 'MO1: Social partners within the SPC work constructively to provide advice on mutual areas of interest' and 'MO3: SPC understands changes over time in how public bodies are complying with the SPD and implementing social partnership working (via. reports)'. This particularly links back through to the preparation of 'effective' information and advice for Welsh Ministers (SO3).

3.3.5. Within long term outcomes, SPC, high level vision

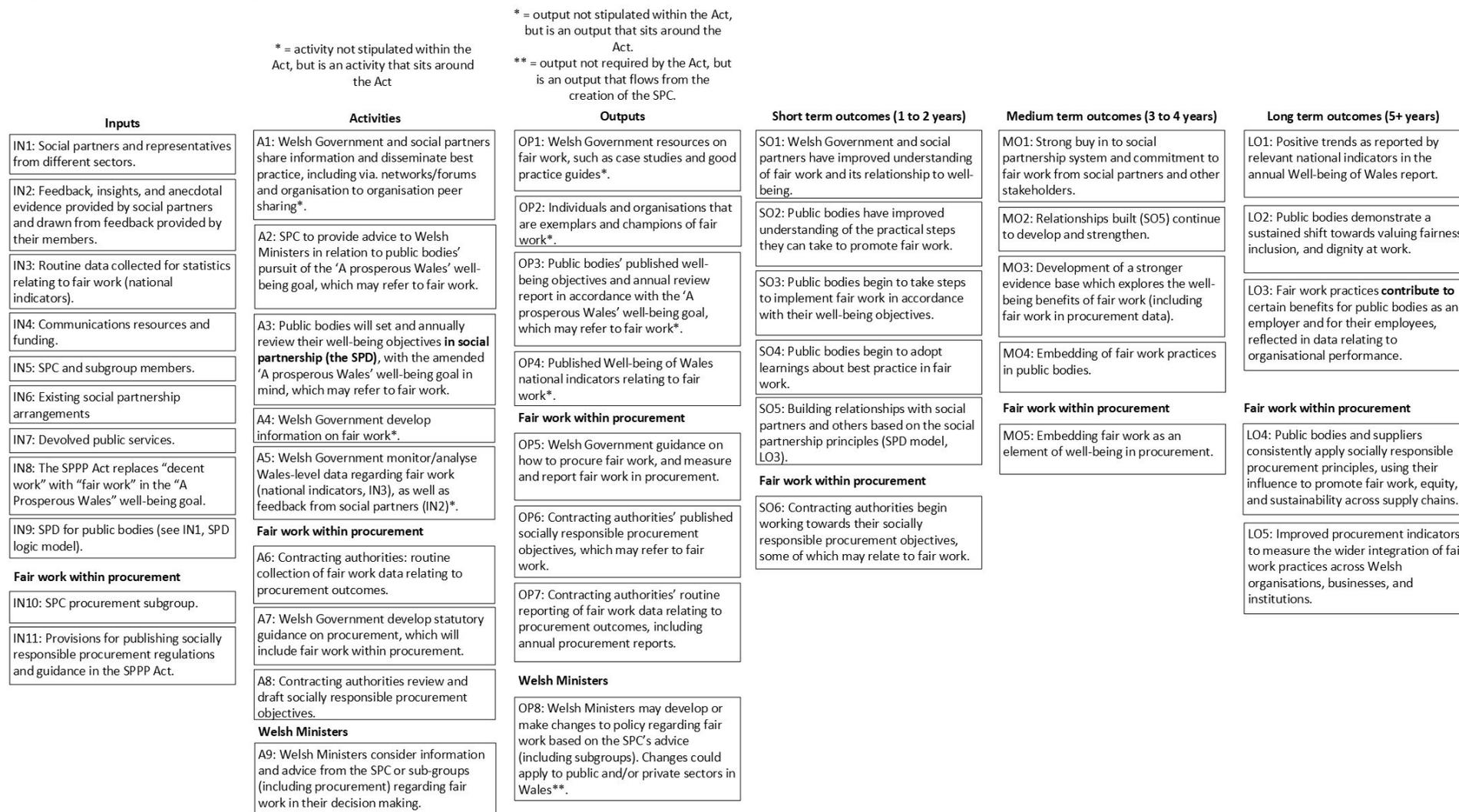
The long-term outcome 'LO1: Contributions to improving economic, environmental, social, and cultural well-being (including by improving public services) in Wales' is the high-level vision for the SPC, meaning it follows on from the main long-term outcomes.

Together, LO2 and LO3 feed into LO1. The operation of the SPC and the associated information and advice that can shape policy delivery, could ultimately contribute to improvements in well-being.

LO1 will also be linked to the SPC procurement sub-group. This is because the long-term aim of socially responsible procurement is to contribute to improvements in economic, environmental, social, and cultural well-being in Wales. Any future procurement logic model will need to account for these connections.

3.4. Fair work logic model and chains

Figure 3: Fair work logic model



3.4.1. Activities to outputs chains, fair work

Output 'OP1: Welsh Government resources on fair work, such as case studies and good practice guides' is linked to activities that involve the production of information and resources relating to fair work. This includes:

- A1: Welsh Government and social partners share information and disseminate best practice, including via. networks/forums and organisation to organisation peer sharing
- A2: SPC to provide advice to Welsh Ministers in relation to public bodies' pursuit of the 'A prosperous Wales' well-being goal, which may refer to fair work
- A4: Welsh Government develop information on fair work
- A5: Welsh Government monitor/analyse Wales-level data regarding fair work (national indicators, IN3), as well as feedback from social partners (IN2)

The SPC's advice to Welsh Ministers (A2), Welsh Government's development of information on fair work (A4) and Welsh Government's analysis of fair work data and feedback from social partners (A5) will inform the information that Welsh Government and social partners share and disseminate for A1.

Output 'OP2: Individuals and organisations that are exemplars and champions of fair work' is underpinned by activity A1.

Output 'OP3: Public bodies' published well-being objectives and annual review report in accordance with the 'A prosperous Wales' well-being goal, which may refer to fair work' is underpinned by the following activities:

- A2: SPC to provide advice to Welsh Ministers in relation to public bodies' pursuit of the 'A prosperous Wales' well-being goal, which may refer to fair work
- A3: Public bodies will set and annually review their well-being objectives in social partnership (the SPD), with the amended 'A prosperous Wales' well-being goal in mind, which may refer to fair work

Activities A2 and A3 are related because the SPC will review public bodies' annual reports and advise Welsh Ministers accordingly.

'OP4: Published Well-being of Wales national indicators relating to fair work' is linked to activity A5, which begins with 'Welsh Government monitor/analyse Wales-level data regarding fair work'.

Output 'OP5: Welsh Government guidance on how to procure fair work, and measure and report fair work in procurement' is linked to activity 'A7: Welsh Government develop statutory guidance on procurement, which will include fair work within procurement.'

Output 'OP6: Contracting authorities' published socially responsible procurement objectives, which may refer to fair work' is linked to activity 'A8: Contracting authorities review and draft socially responsible procurement objectives'.

Output 'OP7: Contracting authorities' routine reporting of fair work data relating to procurement outcomes, including annual procurement reports' is underpinned by activity 'A6: Contracting authorities: routine collection of fair work data relating to procurement outcomes'.

Output 'OP8: Welsh Ministers may develop or make changes to policy regarding fair work based on the SPC's advice (including subgroups). Changes could apply to public and/or private sectors in Wales', is underpinned by activity 'A9: Welsh Ministers consider information and advice from the SPC or sub-groups (including procurement) regarding fair work in their decision making'.

3.4.2. Outputs to short term outcomes chains, fair work

Outcome 'SO1: Welsh Government and social partners have improved understanding of fair work and its relationship to well-being' is linked to the following outputs:

- OP1: Welsh Government resources on fair work, such as case studies and good practice guides
- OP2: Individuals and organisations that are exemplars and champions of fair work
- OP3: Public bodies' published well-being objectives and annual review report in accordance with the 'A prosperous Wales' well-being goal, which may refer to fair work
- OP4: Published Well-being of Wales national indicators relating to fair work
- OP7: Contracting authorities' routine reporting of fair work data relating to procurement outcomes, including annual procurement reports
- OP8: Welsh Ministers may develop or make changes to policy regarding fair work based on the SPC's advice (including subgroups). Changes could apply to public and/or private sectors in Wales

Outcome 'SO2: Public bodies have improved understanding of the practical steps they can take to promote fair work' is linked to the following outputs:

- OP1
- OP2
- OP3
- OP5: Welsh Government guidance on how to procure fair work, and measure and report fair work in procurement
- OP8

Outcome 'SO3: Public bodies begin to take steps to implement fair work in accordance with their well-being objectives' is linked to output 'OP3: Public bodies' published well-being objectives and annual review report in accordance with the 'A prosperous Wales' well-being goal, which may refer to fair work'. This is because if public bodies are setting and annually reviewing their well-being objectives relating to fair work in social partnership (A3) then they should be publishing and implementing these objectives.

Outcome 'SO4: Public bodies begin to adopt learnings about best practice in fair work' is linked to output OP1, which begins with 'Welsh Government resources on fair work' and 'OP2: Individuals and organisations that are exemplars and champions of fair work'. This is because public bodies should be able to apply insights regarding best practice in fair work by drawing on the resources provided by Welsh Government.

Outcome 'SO5: Building relationships with social partners and others based on the social partnership principles (SPD model, LO3)' does not link on to an output in itself. Rather, it relates to A3 which describes public bodies working in social partnership to set their well-being objectives, which may refer to fair work in line with the 'A prosperous Wales' goal. Also, A2 which describes the SPC providing advice regarding pursuit of this goal. As such, this outcome is more so an outcome of the other elements of the Act, and is where the fair work model links to the other logic models.

Outcome 'SO6: Contracting authorities begin working towards their socially responsible procurement objectives, some of which may relate to fair work' is produced by the following outputs:

- OP5: Welsh Government guidance on how to procure fair work, and measure and report fair work in procurement
- OP6: Contracting authorities' published socially responsible procurement objectives, which may refer to fair work
- OP7: Contracting authorities' routine reporting of fair work data relating to procurement outcomes, including annual procurement reports

3.4.3. Short term outcomes to medium term outcomes chains, fair work

The outcome 'MO1: Strong buy in to social partnership system and commitment to fair work from social partners and other stakeholders' is connected to the following short-term outcomes:

- SO1: Welsh Government and social partners have improved understanding of fair work and its relationship to well-being
- SO2: Public bodies have improved understanding of the practical steps they can take to promote fair work
- SO3: Public bodies begin to take steps to implement fair work in accordance with their well-being objectives
- SO4: Public bodies begin to adopt learnings about best practice in fair work

MO1 also connects the fair work logic model to the SPD and SPC logic models. This is because if social partners and other stakeholders share a common understanding of the SPD and its associated values and behaviours, this should strengthen their commitment to the social partnership system and fair work.

'MO2: Relationships built (SO5) continue to develop and strengthen' directly follows on from SO5. As discussed at SO5 this links the fair work model to the SPD and SPC models.

The outcome 'MO3: Development of a stronger evidence base which explores the well-being benefits of fair work (including fair work in procurement data)' is connected to the following short-term outcomes:

- SO1
- SO2
- SO3
- SO6: Contracting authorities begin working towards their socially responsible procurement objectives, some of which may relate to fair work (via. activity A6 and output OP7, collection and reporting of fair work in procurement data)

Outcome 'MO4: Embedding of fair work practices in public bodies' is connected to the following short-term outcomes:

- SO2
- SO3
- SO4

Outcome 'MO5: Embedding fair work as an element of well-being in procurement', is related to outcome 'SO6: Contracting authorities begin working towards their socially responsible procurement objectives, some of which may relate to fair work'.

3.4.4. Medium term outcomes to long term outcomes chains, fair work

The long-term outcome 'LO1: Positive trends as reported by relevant national indicators in the annual Well-being of Wales report' is linked to the following medium-term outcomes:

- MO1: Strong buy in to social partnership system and commitment to fair work from social partners and other stakeholders
- MO2: Relationships built (SO5) continue to develop and strengthen
- MO3: Development of a stronger evidence base which explores the well-being benefits of fair work (including fair work in procurement data)
- MO4: Embedding of fair work practices in public bodies

These medium-term outcomes are linked to LO1 because if they are realised, then they would show as positive trends as reported by national indicators in the annual Well-being of Wales report. It is important to note, however, that it is likely that any positive contribution would be small, as the national indicators are high level.

The long-term outcome 'LO2: Public bodies demonstrate a sustained shift towards valuing fairness, inclusion, and dignity at work' is linked to the following medium-term outcomes:

- MO1
- MO2
- MO4

The long-term outcome 'LO3: Fair work practices contribute to certain benefits for public bodies as an employer and for their employees, reflected in data relating to organisational performance' relates to the following medium-term outcomes:

- MO1
- MO4

The long-term outcome 'LO4: Public bodies and suppliers consistently apply socially responsible procurement principles, using their influence to promote fair work, equity, and sustainability across supply chains' is linked to medium-term outcome 'MO5: Embedding fair work as an element of well-being in procurement'.

The long-term outcome 'LO5: Improved procurement indicators to measure the wider integration of fair work practices across Welsh organisations, businesses, and institutions' is linked to the following medium-term outcomes:

- MO3
- MO5: Embedding fair work as an element of well-being in procurement

3.5. Connections between logic models

3.5.1. Connections between SPC and SPD

The main connection between the SPD and SPC logic models is that a core function of the SPC is to monitor public body reports on how they have complied with the SPD, which may generate information and advice which feeds back into implementation of the SPD.

Regarding medium term outcomes, the SPC contributes to the SPD logic model 'MO1: Public bodies demonstrate improvements in social partnership arrangements, including acting upon information/advice via SPC, Welsh Ministers, and Welsh Government engagement'. This is via activity A5 in the SPC logic model, which involves the SPC's review of public body reports on how they have complied with the SPD. This links into A2 in the SPD model, which outlines Welsh Government developing information and engagement opportunities, which the SPC advice can feed into.

In the same way, the SPC contributes to the SPD logic model long term outcomes:

- LO3: Fulfilment of social partnership principles in ways of working in public bodies (cooperation, respect, trust, voice and participation, mutual gains)
- LO4: Social partnership is embedded in public bodies' strategic decision making
- LO5: Strategic decisions that consider workforce needs through social partnership working (MO4) can lead to more equal and collaborative workplaces in public bodies (as LO3). These improvements may be reflected in enhanced organisational performance.

The other main connection is that Welsh Ministers must consult with the SPC as part of the SPD on Welsh Ministers and agree their annual report together. The related activities and outputs are:

- SPC logic model, A6: SPC members are consulted on the strategic drivers and agreement of the Welsh Ministers report on compliance with the duty
- SPD logic model, A6: Welsh Ministers consider information and advice from the SPC regarding the SPD on public bodies and Welsh Ministers in their decision making
- SPC logic model, OP5: Welsh Ministers must produce a report for each financial year (section 19), agreed with the SPC, explaining what they have done to comply with the duty imposed under section 17
- SPD logic model, OP4: The Welsh Ministers must prepare, in respect of each financial year, a report of what they have done to comply with the duty imposed under section 17. Reports are agreed with the SPC

Finally, common across both logic models (OP6 for SPD and SPC) is that 'Welsh Ministers may develop or make changes to policy based on the SPC's advice'.

3.5.2. Connections between fair work, and SPC and SPD

Fair work within the Act is limited to the changing of wording of the 'A prosperous Wales' well-being goal to include fair work. Fair work therefore is a topic which crosscuts the SPD, SPC and procurement elements, which are the elements that legislate for specific actions and behaviours. Within the ToC, the Act contributes to fair work in the public sector through public bodies discharging the SPD and the work of the SPC, in relation to the 'A prosperous Wales' goal.

The process components which link together include:

- A3, fair work: Public bodies will set and annually review their well-being objectives in social partnership (the SPD), with the amended 'A prosperous Wales' well-being goal in mind, which may refer to fair work
- OP2, SPD: Public bodies must prepare, in respect of each financial year, a report of what it has done to comply with the duty imposed under section 16. These are submitted to the SPC for consideration
- A1, SPC: SPC meetings, whereby members provide information and advice to Welsh Ministers regarding: social partnership duties on Welsh Ministers and public bodies, the pursuit of 'A prosperous Wales' well-being goal by public bodies

Again, an output common across logic models is Welsh Ministers developing policy based on the SPC's advice (OP6 for SPD and SPC, OP8 for fair work). OP8 specifically references this is policy regarding fair work.

Through the processes listed above, the SPD and SPC logic models are also linked to the fair work logic model through the fair work logic model short-term outcome 'SO5: Building relationships with social partners and others based on the social partnership principles' and the medium-term outcome 'MO1: Strong buy in to social partnership system and commitment to fair work from social partners and other stakeholders'. This is because the SPD and SPC are where the specific actions occur, involving fair work in discussions.

The fair work logic model is linked to the high-level vision in the SPD and SPC logic model, which is long term outcome 'LO1: Contributions to improving economic, environmental, social and cultural well-being (including by improving public services) in Wales'. This is because it is an assumption that the SPC and public bodies working in social partnership and with a commitment to fair work will contribute to improved well-being in Wales, as measured by the indicators in the Well-Being of Wales annual report. This relates to fair work logic model 'LO1: Positive trends as reported by relevant national indicators in the annual Well-being of Wales report'.

3.5.3. Connections with procurement

The procurement logic model is not part of the remit of this report. There are however important links across logic models.

Procurement and fair work are connected as the socially responsible procurement duty means contracting authorities must publish socially responsible procurement objectives which maximise contribution to well-being goals. This includes the 'A prosperous Wales' well-being goal, which could therefore include fair work. This is indicated under 'Fair work within procurement' headings in the fair work logic model.

Procurement is connected to the SPC via. the procurement subgroup and resulting information and advice from Welsh Ministers which could include procurement.

4. Definition and measurement of outcomes

Many outcomes refer to social partners. Within Welsh Government or the SPC, this refers to Welsh Ministers, employers and workers (represented by trade unions). Within public bodies, this refers to employers and workers (represented by trade unions or other staff representatives).

Many outcomes refer to measurement through primary data collection. This refers to methods including surveys, interviews and focus groups. Decisions on which method to use would be made during evaluation contracting.

4.1. The SPD outcomes

4.1.1. SO1: Social partners within public bodies and Welsh Government have a better understanding of each other's concerns

This outcome was not explicitly discussed in the workshop but there were related discussions. In bringing workers and employers together in strategic decision making (and Welsh Ministers for Welsh Government via. the SPC), there would be awareness of the views of different social partners. As such, there should be an understanding of any concerns, which there may not have been before the SPD. For public bodies this outcome would link in with SO5 which outlines bringing workers into strategic decision making, via. which SO1 would happen.

The extent to which social partners within the SPC and public bodies understand each other's concerns would be ascertained through self-reporting, using primary data collection methods.

4.1.2. 'SO2: Social partners within public bodies are clear about the aims and boundaries of the Act (SPD, SPC and fair work)' and 'SO3: Social partners within public bodies have improved understanding/knowledge about ways of social partnership working and best practice'

Though these outcomes were not explicitly discussed in the workshop, there were related discussions.

Participants discussed instances where it appeared that social partners within public bodies did not fully understand the expectations or remit of the Act. For example, SPD reports focusing on speaking with worker representatives about industrial relations or HR issues, rather than how workers have been involved in setting well-being objectives and strategic decisions about steps to meet these objectives. Also, not understanding terminology, such as what decisions of a strategic nature are. In addition, not fully understanding what it means to agree the SPD report with worker representatives.

Participants also discussed the 'champions' initiative being undertaken by communication and engagement colleagues in Welsh Government (Chapter 3, 'Additional information for the SPD logic model'). Though outside the Act itself, by pairing public bodies with each other to share how they are implementing the SPD, this would influence SO2 and SO3.

Therefore, SO2 and SO3 could be assessed through changes in the content of SPD reports. Also, champions scheme records held by Welsh Government, such as notes of discussions and actions resulting from discussions. These could also be assessed through primary data collection with social partners in public bodies, a self-report assessment of understanding of the Act and how social partnership can be implemented. This would include those involved in the champions initiative.

Other legislation was an external factor mentioned that could influence understanding of the Act. The terminology 'decisions of a strategic nature' is used in the [Explanatory Memorandum to The Health Impact Assessment \(Wales\) Regulations 2025 \(Senedd Cymru\) \(pdf\)](#). This proposes public bodies must undertake a Health Impact Assessment when making decisions of a strategic nature about how to exercise their functions. As the terminology is the same as the Act, this may help public bodies to identify what strategic decisions are and so to what the SPD should be applied to.

4.1.3. SO5: Workers in public bodies begin to actively participate/have a voice in strategic decision making about workplace practices, policy development and delivery of public services

Participants felt that in demonstrating this outcome, public bodies would move away from a focus on HR or industrial relations in social partnership discussions. Instead, they would focus more on the setting of well-being objectives and other strategic decisions about steps to meet these objectives, such as in corporate planning, financial planning and budgets, workforce planning, and asset management.

Moreover, public bodies may set up new structures or processes to bring employers and workers together and to involve workers in decisions. It would be expected discussions would be held, rather than only asking for worker representatives' comments on reading material over email. Public bodies would also start to involve workers in decisions at a formative stage of the process, compared to the past situation where consultation is typically after decisions are already made, for sign-off only.

Participants raised that public bodies' journey to SO5 will take different amounts of time and will vary by starting place. So, while this is reflected as a short-term outcome of 1 to 2 years in the logic model, this may be a medium-term outcome of 3 to 4 years for some public bodies.

This outcome would mainly be evidenced through changes over time in public bodies' SPD reports. Other documents were discussed, such as meeting minutes of the discussions between employers and workers. However, these are held by public bodies and while some may publish meeting minutes on their websites, this is unlikely due to discussing internal matters. It would be the public bodies' decision whether these documents could be shared with the evaluator. Therefore, alongside SPD reports, this outcome would likely be assessed through primary data collection with social partners in public bodies.

4.1.4. MO1: Public bodies demonstrate improvements in social partnership arrangements, including acting upon information/advice via SPC, Welsh Ministers, and Welsh Government engagement

The ways in which SO5 would be demonstrated are the same factors which would demonstrate improvements in social partnership arrangements at MO1 (focus on well-being objectives and related strategic decisions, new processes and structures, holding discussions, and involving at a formative stage). As such, measurement of improvements in social partnership arrangements would also be as reported at SO5 (changes over time in SPD reports, primary data collection with social partners in public bodies). For any primary data collection, recall of how things have changed is a likely challenge.

Regarding acting on information or advice via the SPC and Welsh Ministers, this includes the outcomes of the SPC's review of SPD reports, communicated through Welsh Ministers. Public bodies could then incorporate this feedback. Regarding acting on information or advice via Welsh Government engagement, this includes use of published training materials, as well as learning through the 'champions' initiative.

Whether public bodies have acted on different sources of information or advice to improve their social partnership arrangements would have to be ascertained by self-report primary data collection methods from public bodies. Again, recall of events will likely be a challenge.

Document records held by Welsh Government engagement or the SPC secretariat could also provide insight into whether their information or advice has been utilised. As such, what information or advice has been given, and then where possible whether this was actioned or utilised by public bodies, should start to be logged and tracked by these teams.

4.1.5. MO2: Common vision among social partners within public bodies on mutual areas of interest, what social partnerships are and how they can be implemented

This outcome was not explicitly discussed in the workshop but there were related discussions.

The term 'mutual areas of interest' is also used at MO1 in the SPC logic model. Participants defined this as worker and employer representatives identifying shared objectives, and topics were those that both identify as important. Both parties are then able to bring these topics forward for discussion. This is opposed to employer or worker representatives bringing forward their views only. This would be a proactive process, rather than reactive.

In terms of 'what social partnerships are and how they can be implemented', this follows on from the short-term outcomes about being clear about the aims and boundaries of the Act (SO2) and improved understanding about ways of social partnership working and best practice (SO3).

Self-report through primary data collection with social partners could ascertain whether there is a 'common vision' across worker and employer representatives in public bodies on areas of interest and the definition and implementation of social partnership working.

4.1.6. 'SO4: Relationships are built between Welsh Government and public bodies, between public bodies, and within public bodies across social partners (employers, workers)' and 'MO3: Strengthened relationships and communication between social partners; Welsh Government and public bodies, between public bodies, and within public bodies across social partners'

These outcomes relate to each other, where in the short-term relationships are built, and in the medium term these continue to develop and strengthen.

4.1.6.1. Between Welsh Government and public bodies

This could be demonstrated through public bodies' engagement with materials and events developed by the engagement and communications team. For example, engaging with the champions initiative, or with bespoke support offered by the team (such as presentations, meetings, self-assessment tools).

Also, this could be demonstrated through public bodies proactively reaching out to Welsh Government with questions about the Act.

4.1.6.2. Between public bodies

This could be demonstrated through public bodies' engagement in the champions initiative, where public bodies are paired to encourage peer learning.

4.1.6.3. Within public bodies across social partners (workers, employers)

MO3 in the SPD mirrors MO2 in the SPC logic model 'strengthened relationships and communication between social partners (Welsh Ministers, employers, workers)'. Based on related discussions, strengthened relationships between social partners in public bodies may be evidenced through developing collective views, rather than separate perspectives between employers and workers. They may also start to demonstrate some of the social partnership principles (SPD LO3; cooperation, respect, trust).

4.1.6.4. Measurement

Measurement of 'between Welsh Government and public bodies' and 'between public bodies' would be reliant on records held by the Welsh Government engagement team of the materials and events or meetings developed. Also, a track of which public bodies have utilised these and any feedback received. Additionally, any queries received by the team.

Across all types of relationship mentioned, perceptions of relationships would also need to be captured by primary data collection with Welsh Government officials, and social partners in public bodies.

4.1.7. MO4: Working in social partnership when making strategic decisions contributes to public bodies developing policies that consider workforce needs

The SPD reports would not necessarily detail that through working in social partnership when making strategic decisions about well-being objectives there were resulting changes in policies, and what these changes were.

Attribution for this outcome was also questioned, as there are many people consulted on changes in policies. However, the outcome does specify that the social partnership working is a contribution, rather than a sole factor.

Therefore, primary data collection with trade union representatives would be important to ascertain whether worker voice in strategic decisions contributed to changes in policies. 'Branch representatives' were reported as the most appropriate level to involve in evaluation as they are elected by members so represent worker voice and would attend strategic meetings. Regional level representatives may also be appropriate. Primary data collection with the 'employer' side of the social partnership in public bodies would also be needed.

4.1.8. LO3: Fulfilment of social partnership principles in ways of working in public bodies

The principles are:

- cooperation; a shared commitment to success
- respect; mutual recognition of legitimate (and potentially divergent) interests and expertise
- trust; openness, transparency
- voice and participation; proactive and timely information, consultation and engagement
- mutual gains; fair work outcomes, and (as LO1) increased well-being and improvements to public services

These principles were regarded as applying to public bodies, and for Welsh Government applying through the SPC.

Participants discussed the cooperation principle would be demonstrated by workers and employers 'coming to the table' with a commitment and willingness to find common ground, rather than solely their own interests. Participants also discussed worker representatives having meaningful and equal input, rather than a paternalistic relationship with the employer. In the tripartite SPC structure, workers and employers would be truly communicating rather than Welsh Government being the intermediary.

Respect would be demonstrated by recognition by workers and employers that they do not have to agree and creating a context that allows people to disagree agreeably.

Trust would be demonstrated by employers bringing worker representatives into decision making structures and sharing information with worker representatives that is confidential. Also, sharing information that would not have necessarily been shared previously (such as budgetary information). Participants acknowledged worker representatives would likely need to get used to receiving this type of information and how to interpret it.

Voice and participation would be demonstrated by worker representatives getting information at an early stage. Also, that they receive sufficient information prior to meetings to enable them to contribute fully to discussions, with sufficient time. In addition, rather than proposing something to worker representatives for sign off only, it would be expected solutions are developed in collaboration. These elements align with the 'Gunning Principles' (1985) for consultation.

Again, these principles would be evidenced through SPD reports. Also, in how these reports are developed. Where initially reports may be written by the employer and signed off by worker representatives, this should shift towards a report being produced together. To understand how reports are produced, evaluators would need to use primary data collection methods with employer and worker representatives.

For these principles to be fulfilled, there needs to be a consistent understanding of the remit of social partnership within the Act. As noted at SO2 and SO3, participants reported there is currently some inconsistent understanding. This would need primary data collection, possibly including a self-report assessment of understanding of social partnership and the Act with social partners in public bodies.

Another suggested way to evidence these principles being fulfilled was through whether the social partners have demonstrated continuing to work in social partnership on setting objectives and strategic decisions during and after industrial relations issues (such as strikes, pay negotiations). Participants felt this ability to separate these things ('wearing different hats') would show commitment to social partnership. Participants in the workshop gave some examples of public bodies where this has been demonstrated. SPEFW officials should continue to record and log this type of information as this would be useful for a future evaluator. Evaluators would also need to use a primary data collection approach with worker representatives to understand industrial relations issues and whether these affected social partnership within the public bodies.

4.1.9. LO4: Social partnership is embedded in public bodies' strategic decision making

This long-term outcome follows on from SO5 and MO1. The difference for LO4 is the 'embedding', such that over time social partnership is the 'default' and consistently utilised when setting well-being objectives and making strategic decisions about steps to meet these objectives. Measurement would also be the same as reported at SO5 and MO1.

4.1.10. LO5: Strategic decisions that consider workforce needs through social partnership working (MO4) can lead to more equal and collaborative workplaces in public bodies (as LO3). These improvements may be reflected in enhanced organisational performance

Examples of elements of organisational performance are:

- improved worker well-being, morale, resilience
- lower staff turnover/improved retention
- fewer strikes, for example through engaging workers from the outset and so avoiding reaching this stage
- fewer disciplinaries, for example through working in social partnership to revise disciplinary processes

Organisational performance is also discussed at LO3 for fair work.

4.1.10.1. Well-being, morale and resilience

Participants discussed these elements would be reflected in staff sickness data which would be held by HR departments in public bodies.

A preliminary search showed many public bodies (around 29) publish data relating to sickness. Published data was typically annual and included measures such as average days lost to sickness, and sickness absence rates expressed as a percentage. [The Office for National Statistics produce sickness absence in the labour market estimates](#), including for the public sector, though this is published for the UK and not Wales specifically.

Though not discussed in the workshop, other measures of well-being, morale and resilience may be collected through staff surveys held within public bodies. These surveys could, for example, contain measures like those used in the [Civil Service people survey on employee well-being \(GOV.UK, 2024\)](#). These are a self-assessment of life satisfaction, feeling that things in life are worthwhile, happiness, anxiety, mental health, and physical health.

4.1.10.2. Turnover and retention

Turnover would be held by public bodies. A preliminary search showed around 16 public bodies published turnover data. Published data was usually an annual turnover percentage, though was sometimes a retention percentage or the number of joiners and leavers.

Turnover is also held on the Interdepartmental Business Register within Welsh Government. This covers around 42 of the public bodies. However, this is only a snapshot for one month in the year. There are also stringent restrictions on the sharing and use of these data. As such, getting turnover and retention directly from public bodies was thought to be the most appropriate option.

4.1.10.3. Strikes and disciplinaries

Public body HR departments would hold this information.

4.1.10.4. Challenges for organisational performance metrics at LO5

As the metrics discussed are held by public bodies, the main issue anticipated is data sharing. If they are not published it is unlikely an evaluator would be able to access this information and would be subject to agreements with public bodies. It would also depend on the original privacy notice under which the data were collected. Where they are published, the timing of publication will vary, affecting comparison.

Another issue, as discussed for sickness and turnover data, is that the metrics used to measure concepts are inconsistent across public bodies and likely to be collected and calculated in different ways which affects comparability.

Access to, and comparability of, any metrics would need to be scoped by a future evaluator.

Participants highlighted this outcome sits further away from the Act and would not be possible to attribute the Act to these elements. Any of these metrics should only be looked at as a collective.

Using qualitative methods to supplement these metrics would be important, to ascertain whether public bodies view social partnership working practices as contributing to these metrics. Also, to describe what other events have happened within the public body, and wider contextual influencers, to lead to any changes in data.

4.2. The SPC outcomes

4.2.1. SO1: SPC members understand expectations and have a shared commitment to work as a group

This outcome was not discussed, but related discussions indicate that a 'shared commitment' could be understood in terms of members' conduct and the standards and expectations which they agree to collectively.

This could be measured by reviewing the SPC meeting minutes and by primary data collection with SPC members.

4.2.2. SO2: A formal channel whereby social partners are involved in a partnership and dialogue with Welsh Ministers on policy implementation and development

This outcome was not discussed, but related discussions indicate that this would be demonstrated through the SPC being set up and operating. As such, it could be measured by reviewing the SPC meeting minutes.

4.2.3. SO3: Sufficient experience and knowledge within the SPC to prepare effective information and advice for Welsh Ministers, meaning advice is: robust, authoritative, and where relevant costed, appraised for risk and fully assessed for its potential impacts

Participants defined 'robust' as evidence-based advice which can command the support of a majority. Participants defined 'authoritative' as advice that can be considered representative of the views of who the SPC members are representing (employer sectors and workers), rather than being based on members personal opinions.

To measure SO3, participants stated that all the SPC's information and advice would be published. This would be reviewed by an evaluator against the criteria listed within the outcome. This would include any papers prepared by SPC subgroups and SPC minutes. It was noted that SPC minutes represented more informal advice which would not include anything confidential, although there would be an internal record of the confidential minutes.

4.2.4. SO4: Social partners within the SPC are clear about the aims and boundaries of the Act (SPD, SPC and fair work)

This outcome was not discussed, but related discussions included instances where it appeared that social partners within the SPC did not fully understand boundaries of the Act. In particular, it was noted that the SPC is not a public facing body, meaning that it will not itself issue public facing advice or information. Its role is restricted to its statutory remit. This is one area of understanding that could be assessed.

Changes in SPC members' understanding could be measured by utilising SPC minutes and by primary data collection with SPC members.

4.2.5. SO5: Operation of the SPC is refined where appropriate

This outcome was not explicitly discussed in the workshop. It refers directly to the result of the activities and outputs for the SPC reviewing their own activity. Evidence for understanding how the SPC's operation has been refined could be found by reviewing relevant documents detailing this process and by primary data collection with the SPC secretariat.

4.2.6. MO1: Social partners within the SPC work constructively to provide advice on mutual areas of interest

Participants cited the Workforce Partnership Council as a positive example of MO1. Participants stated that there are various components to this model, including: working together and identifying areas of shared interest, building buy in through this shared interest to foster open discussion, and producing joint advice. Effectiveness and quality of advice on AI has been demonstrated by all social partners accepting it.

Therefore, participants identified various measures that could be used to determine whether social partners within the SPC have been working constructively. These measures included:

- being proactive in raising agenda items and identifying shared objectives or topics where all partners have an interest (rather than bringing issues to the SPC independently of each other), with a view to act on (rather than just to be provided with an update)
- producing regular, formal, joint advice to Welsh Ministers, which could take the form of outputs such as papers and reports, and should be robust (as SO3)
- a shift from giving Welsh Ministers individual and reactive advice during meetings, to more collective advice
- social partners' willingness to establish and participate in sub-group meetings

Participants identified several challenges when it came to meeting the outcome. The SPC meets a few times a year, which means that it takes time for the hoped-for behaviours to show. Some participating organisations are small which means that members' capacity to engage with the SPC in addition to their 'day jobs' is limited. Members may be unfamiliar with the fast-paced nature of policymaking which does not leave much time for consultation, so members need to get used to providing advice during meetings without pre-reading materials. Another challenge was the limited influence of the SPC which is constrained by its statutory nature and the limited resources of its members.

Social partners also represent very different organisations that have different modes of operation and forms of authority. For example, social partners from trade unions have a mandate to represent their members, whereas social partners representing employers do not have any such mandate. Moreover, trade union representatives may bring similar views, whereas those from employers tend to be more disparate.

Finally, participants also stated that there can be issues with producing useful advice. Social partners may be able to agree on topics that are of mutual interest. However, their conflicting interests regarding the topic may mean that the only type of advice that all social partners are willing to sign up to may be vague, which limits practical value.

4.2.7. MO2: Strengthened relationships and communication between social partners (Welsh Ministers, employers, workers)

Participants suggest that strengthened relationships and communication between social partners would be seen through working collaboratively on mutual areas of interest to provide collectively agreed advice (as MO1). A strengthened working relationship between social partners would also be seen through some of the social partnership principles (SPD LO3; cooperation, respect, trust).

This could be measured through primary data collection; self-reporting from worker and employer representatives on whether they feel they have stronger communication and relationships. This would be alongside measures for SPC MO1 and SPD LO3.

4.2.8. MO3: SPC understands changes over time in how public bodies are complying with the SPD and implementing social partnership working (via. reports)

Participants were not asked about this outcome, but related discussions indicate that in this outcome could be measured using SPC minutes, document records of its analysis of public bodies' reports, and document records of any advice that the SPC provides.

4.2.9. LO3: Worker and employer views actively help to shape policy delivery (through the tripartite structure of the SPC)

This outcome was not discussed. Based on related discussions it could be measured by reviewing SPC minutes. Annual SPD reports by Welsh Ministers and public bodies could also be used to assess whether worker and employer views delivered through the SPC are helping to shape policy delivery. Moreover, document records about any information and advice or policy changes Welsh Ministers have made which SPC advice has fed into would be useful.

Participants reported that attributing changes to policymaking resulting from advice from social partners would be difficult, unless a Welsh Minister or public body stated on record that they are making changes because of advice from the SPC.

4.2.10. How might we know that the SPC reviewing public body reports is reinforcing the SPD?

The SPC logic model highlights where it contributes to medium- and long-term impacts in the SPD logic model (MO1, LO3, LO4, LO5).

To measure the effect of the SPC's review of public bodies' annual SPD reports, participants stated that it would be possible to 'track' the impact of the review over time to establish if public bodies have been acting on the SPC's advice. This would be by looking in the subsequent year at what public bodies have or have not done in context of the advice given. The advice could be from Welsh Ministers, and information developed by Welsh Government SPEFW engagement officials.

This could also be ascertained by primary data collection with the SPC secretariat, SPC members, and those within public bodies involved in social partnership processes.

One of the challenges participants identified was that public bodies are only required to submit their annual SPD report "as soon as reasonably practicable after the end of the financial year" ([the Act, section 18 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)). If there are significant delays in submitting reports, it may mean that public bodies have begun the next year of operation before they have received feedback and advice on the previous year. It was felt the SPC would need reports by around December for this outcome to be realised, as this would allow the SPC time to comment and for the public bodies to action the advice ahead of the next reporting year (beginning April 1st).

4.3. The SPD and SPC outcomes

The long-term outcomes LO1 and LO2 are the same in the SPD and SPC logic models, where both parts of the Act together would contribute to these outcomes. As such, measurement will be discussed together.

4.3.1. LO1: Contributions to improving economic, environmental, social, and cultural well-being (including by improving public services) in Wales

Participants expressed the view that the SPD and SPC could contribute to improvements in the [national well-being indicators](#), which cover each of economic, environmental, social and cultural wellbeing.

Participants identified several mechanisms which could lead to LO1. For the SPC, this could involve Welsh Ministers consulting the SPC on decisions of a strategic nature in steps to meet their well-being objectives (the legislative programme, budget, well-being objectives). In turn, the SPC may provide advice that Welsh Ministers use in policy making, and the resulting policies or changes to policy contribute to the improvement of the well-being of people in Wales.

For the SPD, public bodies working in social partnership on their well-being objectives could improve how they maximise their contribution to the well-being goals under the WFG Act. This in turn could contribute to improving economic, environmental, social and cultural well-being in Wales. Relatedly, the SPD could lead to improvements in well-being in Wales if public sector employers take advice from worker representatives through working in social partnership and this leads to improved policymaking and ultimately service delivery.

To measure this outcome for both the SPD and the SPC, the national well-being indicators could be used, which are included in the annual [Well-being of Wales report](#).

For the SPC specifically, the Welsh Ministers' annual SPD report might provide an indication as to whether they made changes because of advice from the SPC. Also, the topic areas discussed in the SPC could be identified and provide a focus as to whether the SPC has had influence on policy in these specific topic areas over time. For the SPD, public bodies' annual SPD reports and corporate plans might provide some evidence as to how advice from social partners is being factored into decision making and delivery.

It should be noted that LO1 is described as a 'high-level vision'. The long-term well-being outcomes identified in LO1 are not core aims of the Act. The Act may contribute to the realisation of these well-being outcomes, but any improvements are somewhat removed from the Act. Participants noted that attribution is an issue for LO1 for both the SPD and SPC. Participants stated that this is because the well-being indicators are long-term national indicators. Therefore, it will be impossible to directly attribute changes to these well-being indicators to the SPC or public bodies discharging the SPD. Moreover, the same as LO3 for the SPC model, attributing changes to policymaking resulting from advice from social partners would be difficult unless a Welsh Minister or public body stated explicitly what advice had been used.

4.3.2. LO2: Social partnership model operates at national, regional, and local levels across Wales

Participants explained that the national level refers to the SPC and public bodies that operate nationally. The regional level refers to public bodies that operate regionally, such as Corporate Joint Committees. The local level refers to public bodies that operate locally, such as local authorities.

Participants also noted that the SPC has two roles. The first is to demonstrate how social partnership can operate at a national level. The second is to provide advice and feedback on public body SPD reports, which in turn may influence how social partnership operates within public bodies at the national, regional and local levels.

How the SPD is operating at the national, regional and local level could be measured through public bodies' annual SPD reports. The SPC's advice on these reports could be used to measure how the SPC is supporting the implementation of the SPD (and so the social partnership model) at national, regional and local levels. This would involve reviewing successive annual reports from public bodies at all levels to track if and how they are implementing the SPC's advice over time.

4.4. Fair work outcomes

There are specific outcomes for fair work in procurement, of which measurement will not be discussed in this report. This would need to be developed when implementation of the procurement elements of the Act has begun, and the 2023 logic model for procurement has been updated.

4.4.1. SO1: Welsh Government and social partners have improved understanding of fair work and its relationship to well-being

Workshop participants were not explicitly asked about this outcome. It refers to Welsh Government, and worker and employer representatives. Considering wider discussions, this outcome may be evidenced through meeting minutes which show SPC and subgroup discussions regarding fair work. Also, any related outputs such as papers and information or advice produced.

4.4.2. SO2: Public bodies have improved understanding of the practical steps they can take to promote fair work

Workshop participants were not explicitly asked about this outcome. Considering wider discussions, it is not possible to take a measure of understanding in public bodies before (a baseline), to compare to after and show how this has improved.

Like SO2 and SO3 in the SPD logic model which also reference improvements in understanding, this could be captured by known examples of public bodies engaging with the outputs within the logic model (such as OP1: Welsh Government resources on fair work, such as case studies and good practice guides). Examples would need to be logged and tracked by a team in Welsh Government. Primarily, measurement will rely on self-report methods from public bodies through primary data collection.

4.4.3. 'SO3: Public bodies begin to take steps to implement fair work in accordance with their well-being objectives', 'SO4: Public bodies begin to adopt learnings about best practice in fair work' and 'MO4: Embedding of fair work practices in public bodies'

These outcomes are inter-related, so will be discussed together. Overall, measuring these outcomes will be concerned with how practices have evolved over time.

Participants suggested these would be demonstrated through public bodies' published well-being objectives, where they would start to set objectives about fair work and the steps to achieve these under the 'A prosperous Wales' well-being goal. Also, it would be demonstrated in their annual report on progress to meet these objectives. Historically a low number refer to fair work, so it would be expected references to fair work would increase over time, rather than there be a sudden change in levels of reporting.

This information could also be visible in reports by the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales and the Auditor General for Wales.

Participants reported it would also be important to assess whether public bodies' objectives and the steps to meet these are broadly aligned with the steps that can be taken to pursue fair work set out in the [Welsh Government 'guide to fair work' \(2024\)](#). This would provide an aspect of quality, so whether the objectives and steps to achieve these align with Welsh Government expectations and ambitions regarding fair work, rather than simply whether there are objectives and steps.

It would be useful for a team in Welsh Government to use their sector and topic knowledge map out the historic context of fair work practices and well-being objectives and steps relating to fair work in public bodies. This would provide a starting place for an evaluator to assess change over time.

Primary data collection could supplement the documents, and the relevant contacts within public bodies would be those overseeing the well-being objectives process.

In terms of SO4 specifically, 'adopting learnings about best practice', this is like 'MO1' in the SPD logic model, which references public bodies using certain types of information or advice, for example via the SPC. Participants discussed learning could also happen between public bodies, through sharing how they have set their objectives and steps to achieve these. Views on what led to any observed changes in practices would have to be ascertained by self-report methods from public bodies through primary data collection, though recall is a likely challenge.

4.4.4. 'SO5: Building relationships with social partners and others based on the social partnership principles (SPD model, LO3)', 'MO1: Strong buy in to social partnership system and commitment to fair work from social partners and other stakeholders' and 'MO2: Relationships built (SO5) continue to develop and strengthen'

4.4.4.1. Definitions

Participants described 'others' in SO5 and MO1 as those who have an interest in fair work but do not fit within the social partner 'employer' or 'worker' representative categories. This included third-sector organisations. Also, 'procurement professionals' who are intended to sit within the SPC procurement sub-group to provide expertise. This therefore is an outcome which crosses over with the procurement and SPC elements of the Act.

Participants defined a 'strong buy-in to the social partnership system' (MO1) as being demonstrated through progress towards the social partnership principles as per LO3 in the SPD logic model (cooperation, respect, trust, voice and participation, mutual gains). This also describes the principles on which relationships are built (SO5). Moreover, that for 'commitment to fair work' (MO1), there is a common understanding about the agenda for fair work from social partners and others.

MO2 leads on from SO5, where the relationships initially built become stronger over time.

4.4.4.2. Measurement

While these outcomes involve fair work as a topic, they relate more to the other elements of the Act. This is because within the Act, fair work is limited to the change in wording in the 'A prosperous Wales' well-being goal. The elements of the Act these fair work outcomes (SO5, MO1, MO2) relate to includes discussion of fair work within the SPC and its subgroups. Also, public bodies working in social partnership to set their well-being objectives and making related decisions (including around fair work).

As such, most of these outcomes would not require measurement for fair work, as they would be captured as part of measurement of outcomes in other logic models.

The fair work outcomes about relationships (SO5, MO2) would be measured through SO4 and MO3 in the SPD logic model, and MO2 in the SPC logic model. It is also expected there would be a related outcome about relationships in the procurement logic model in terms of the SPC procurement subgroup, which 'others' would attend.

Regarding the fair work outcome MO1 referring to social partnership buy-in, this would be evidenced through LO3 in the SPD logic model.

The element that could be particularly measured is MO1 'commitment to fair work'. This would involve primary data collection to ascertain understanding of the fair work agenda across employer and worker representatives (public bodies, SPC and subgroups), and others (such as wider subgroup attendees).

A potential challenge when assessing concepts such as buy-in and commitment is those with stronger buy in or commitment may be more likely to engage in research.

4.4.5. MO3: Development of a stronger evidence base which explores the well-being benefits of fair work (including fair work in procurement data)

This outcome would be evidenced as part of the procurement element of the Act. Evidence of fair work as an element of well-being in procurement would be within routine procurement data collection, reported annually. This evidence base would develop over time.

This outcome would also be evidenced as part of the information collected for SO3, SO4 and MO4 in the fair work logic model. This is by Welsh Government building an understanding over time about how fair work is being incorporated into public bodies' well-being objectives and steps to achieve these.

4.4.6. LO1: Positive trends as reported by relevant national indicators in the annual Well-being of Wales report

There are three indicators related to fair work included in the [national indicators](#) and reported in the [Well-being of Wales report](#), which are:

- the percentage of people in employment, on permanent contracts (or temporary where not seeking permanent employment) and who earn at least the Real Living Wage
- the pay difference for gender, disability, and ethnicity
- the proportion of employees whose pay is set by collective bargaining

4.4.7. LO2: Public bodies demonstrate a sustained shift towards valuing fairness, inclusion, and dignity at work

Valuing fairness, inclusion and dignity at work was reported as being reflected in:

- an increased uptake of fair work practices
- greater awareness of workers' rights
- trade unions being proactively engaged in workplace improvement
- pay gaps data

The 'fair work practices' refer to those within the [Welsh Government 'guide to fair work' \(2024\)](#). However, this guide is non-exhaustive, and so specific practices viewed as creating fairness, inclusion and dignity at work for public bodies would need to emerge from the research itself.

Awareness of workers' rights was not discussed in the workshop. It is likely this would need to be measured in workers through self-report methods, such as a staff survey. Asking worker representatives (trade unions) would not suffice, as due to the nature of their role their understanding of rights cannot be said to represent the workforce itself. However, the costs and logistics of running a staff survey across public bodies renders this unfeasible.

Trade unions being proactively engaged in workplace improvement was not discussed in the workshop. Based on wider discussions, proactive engagement includes being engaged early and at all stages, with sufficient information. It is likely this would need to be measured through self-report, including primary data collection with both trade union representatives and employer representatives.

The pay gaps refer to gender, ethnicity and disability pay gaps. However, only the gender pay gap is required to be produced by public bodies of over 250 employees ([The Equality Act 2010 \(Gender Pay Gap Information\) Regulations 2017, legislation.gov.uk](#)). Most, but not all, of the 55 public bodies will have over 250 employees (a preliminary search suggests around 15 bodies have not published this information). Also, this means publishing of disability and ethnicity pay gaps will be inconsistent (a preliminary search shows around 5 bodies have published a disability or ethnicity pay gap). While gender, ethnicity and disability pay gaps can also be sought from the Annual Population Survey (Office for National Statistics), a split is only possible by public and private sector organisations where the public sector includes UK government organisations in Wales. Therefore, this would include public bodies not subject to the Act, making the data unusable for evaluation purposes.

4.4.8. LO3: Fair work practices contribute to certain benefits for public bodies as an employer and for their employees, reflected in data relating to organisational performance

The specific 'fair work practices' include those within the [Welsh Government 'guide to fair work' \(2024\)](#). However, this guide is non-exhaustive, and so specific practices viewed as creating organisational performance benefits for public bodies would need to emerge from the research itself rather than being pre-defined.

Organisational performance was described as an umbrella term for specific metrics such as:

- mental and physical health and sickness
- productivity
- recruitment, retention and staff costs

Mental and physical health and sickness and retention were discussed at LO5 for the SPD logic model. To recap, these measures are held by public bodies. They are sometimes published.

For productivity, estimates for public service productivity are produced by the Office for National Statistics, though this published for the UK only. Broadly, output in the public sector is usually measured as the number of activities performed by the relevant service area, or amount of expenditure in that area.

The measurement challenges are the same as SPD LO5. This includes data sharing from public bodies for measures not published being unlikely due to the sensitive nature of topics. Also, for data shared or published, comparability of the data held by public bodies can be low with different measures, collection methods, and timings of collection. Again, as reported at SPD LO5, access to these metrics would need to be scoped by a future evaluator.

These metrics are also high-level indicators, and attribution is not possible. There are many factors that would affect these metrics beyond the Act, and the Act would have a small role only. This includes other pieces of legislation, such as (subject to being passed) the UK Employment Rights Bill.

Therefore, using primary data collection methods to supplement these metrics would be important, to ascertain whether public bodies view fair work practices are contributing to these metrics. Also, to describe what other events have happened within the public body, and wider contextual influencers, to lead to any changes in data.

4.4.9. Summary for fair work long term outcomes

While the fair work element of the Act would be expected to contribute to these long-term outcomes (LO1, 2 and 3), the scope of fair work within the Act is limited. These outcomes sit 'further away' from the Act itself. It is not possible to attribute them to the Act. Therefore, these outcomes would not be a main component or priority for a future evaluation.

4.5. Summary across logic model outcomes

In summary, the documents mentioned across the three areas are:

- SPD reports from public bodies
- meeting minutes and documentation from social partnership meetings from public bodies, subject to public bodies' discretion to share
- public bodies' published well-being objectives and steps to achieve these for the 'A prosperous Wales' well-being goal, and annual progress reports
- reports published by the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales and the Auditor General for Wales
- public bodies' published corporate plans
- meeting minutes from the SPC and its subgroups held by Welsh Government
- records held by Welsh Government of SPC and subgroup outputs (including from the secretariat), such as papers produced, analysis of public bodies' SPD reports
- records held by Welsh Government of what information and advice the SPC has given to Welsh Ministers; and where possible, Welsh Government records of where SPC advice has been used by Welsh Ministers in policy decision making
- records held by Welsh Government of information and advice from Welsh Ministers (via. the SPC); and where possible, records and examples of whether this has been used or actioned by public bodies
- records held by Welsh Government of materials and engagement opportunities produced by the engagement team (including, but not limited to, things produced from the SPC's advice); and where possible, records and examples of whether this has been used or actioned by public bodies
 - this includes champions scheme records held by Welsh Government, such as notes of discussions and actions resulting from discussions
- SPD reports from Welsh Ministers (agreed with the SPC)
- records held by Welsh Government of the process and resulting actions of the SPC reviewing its own operation
- records held by Welsh Government of fair work resources, and records of examples on use of fair work resources by public bodies
- mapping historic context of fair work practices and reference to fair work in objectives in public bodies by Welsh Government
- mapping industrial relations context and events in public bodies over time by Welsh Government

- mapping historic context and starting places for social partnership in the public bodies, and adding knowledge of how this has progressed by Welsh Government

Certain data were also mentioned for LO5 in the SPD logic model and LO1 and LO3 in the fair work logic model, which are:

- measures of health and well-being for workers in public bodies
- measures of turnover and retention in public bodies
- measures of productivity in public bodies
- measures of strikes and disciplinaries in public bodies
- the 'Well-being of Wales' report and national indicators published by Welsh Government

However, these would not be a priority to capture as part of an evaluation due to attribution issues.

In summary, those to involve in primary data collection across the 3 areas are:

- worker and employer representatives involved in social partnership structures and processes within public bodies
 - this includes those from public bodies involved in the champions initiative
 - where worker representatives are from trade unions, this would be 'branch representative' or 'regional' roles
- worker and employer representatives involved in fair work in public bodies
- those in public bodies overseeing the well-being objectives process
- members of the SPC and subgroups, including worker, employer and Welsh Government representatives
- officials in Welsh Government, including; SPC secretariat, communication and engagement team, other SPEFW officials
- other stakeholders, including third sector organisations, and procurement professionals involved in the procurement subgroup

5. Evaluation practicalities and demands

These findings are collated from across the data and practicalities workshops.

5.1. Evaluation demands

5.1.1. Scope

Practicalities workshop participants reported that an evaluation should cover all elements of the Act: SPD, SPC, fair work and socially responsible public procurement. They acknowledged while they are distinct areas, they all tie together which would create difficulties evaluating social partnership and fair work separately from procurement. For example, the procurement sub-group is a core element of both the SPC and socially responsible public procurement parts of the Act (see also Chapter 3, 'Connections between logic models'). Participants highlighted that overall, the Act is about behaviour change according to a set of principles or values, which needs to be captured coherently.

5.1.2. Evaluation users and what users want to know

Practicalities workshop participants reported both process and impact evaluation would be important, though acknowledging there would be different users. Participants felt overall that there would be most interest in the procurement part of the Act.

Participants identified that the Senedd and its committees would be a primary user of the evaluation, as the evaluation was described in the Act's explanatory memorandum. Committees could in theory make recommendations based on the evaluation. The interest would primarily be around impact.

Participants also suggested for social partnership and fair work, trade unions would be interested in the evaluation. Their interest would primarily be around process. It was also raised that SPC members would be interested in the SPC processes.

For procurement, participants noted that the procurement community would be interested in processes. Third sector organisations would be interested in the impact.

Participants reported a secondary use may be UK government, Scottish Government and the Northern Ireland Executive having an interest the Act and its impacts.

5.1.3. Impact evaluation priorities

Overall, practicalities workshop participants felt that what is most important to measure in terms of outcomes are the changes in awareness, engagement, understanding and behaviours over time according to what the Act sets out.

Data workshop participants were asked to reflect on the outcomes that are a priority to understand from a future evaluation (the procurement logic model is not part of this evaluability assessment so is not covered).

For the SPD, participants discussed that the priority areas to understand from an evaluation are the embedded social partnership principles, as these represent the core behaviour change as part of the Act.

For fair work, participants discussed that the priority area for a future evaluation to cover is the extent to which fair work is referenced in well-being objectives and the steps taken to achieve these objectives involving fair work.

For the SPC, participants stated that the impact of the SPC's advice on social partnership arrangements within public bodies should be a priority. Participants also expressed the view that assessing the influence of the added value of having advice jointly developed between worker and employer representatives on specific issues, such as AI, should be another priority area for a future evaluation.

5.1.4. Case studies: SPD, SPC and fair work

For the SPD and fair work, case studies with public bodies were identified as likely the most suitable way to ascertain the outcomes in the logic models.

For the SPC, these case studies with public bodies would be used to understand the points of overlap between the SPC with the SPD and fair work, and as such would also need to cover the use of advice given via the SPC by public bodies. This would address the first priority area described for the SPC.

The SPC would also then have a self-contained evaluation element outside of public body case studies. This would include case studies on topic areas where the SPC may have had a policy influence, depending on the nature of advice given over the course of the SPC's operation (for example, AI). This would address the second priority area described for the SPC.

From a research perspective, building case studies will involve a range of methods such as looking at the documents and data mentioned, as well as primary data collection with the groups mentioned (see Chapter 4).

5.2. Evaluation practicalities

5.2.1. Procurement evaluability assessment

Practicalities workshop participants reported a requirement for an evaluability assessment for the procurement element of the Act.

5.2.2. Preferred timeframe

In the Act's explanatory memorandum, Welsh Ministers stated that they intend to lay before the Senedd a report on the operation and effect of the Act at the end of the 5-year post-implementation period. Practicalities workshop participants highlighted that this is 5 years after the provisions have come into force. Also, that this is flexible, and 5 years was described as the 'shorter end' – the earliest point at which a full impact evaluation can be carried out.

Participants discussed that as the Act is about behaviour change, change will take time to see.

While the provisions of the SPD, SPC and fair work began implementation in early 2024, procurement provisions are expected to fully come into force in April 2026. Basing 5 years from the social partnership and fair work provisions, participant discussions highlighted that 2029 would be the earliest year for an evaluation (in terms of Welsh Government financial years, April 2029 to March 2030). Due to the procurement time lag, it was noted there would be information about implementation in 2029, described as 'coming into steady state'. However, the time series or change over time (including for annual procurement reports) is an important element, which would not be able to be captured by 2029 and would need at least 5 years. Therefore, an evaluation may not be possible until the April 2031 to March 2032 financial year.

Therefore, the challenge is in planning the evaluation so that it covers all elements of the Act with the disparity in implementation timeframes.

5.2.3. Funding

At the time of writing this report (autumn/winter 2025), the May 2026 Senedd elections were upcoming. As such, workshop participants could not provide an estimation of budget for an evaluation. Any budget would be split between social partnership and fair work, and procurement. This may not be an even split, which is a potential challenge.

Resource may also be required for a Welsh Government analyst to manage the contract for the evaluation.

5.3. Challenges and risks relevant to the evaluation

5.3.1. SPD reports

When relying on SPD reports from public bodies, the challenge is that the Act does not include a deadline for submitting this report. At the time of the data workshop in September 2025, only around 20% of reports had been received since the window opening in April. This will affect the time point at which year on year change in the content of these reports can be assessed. This will also affect whether the SPC has sufficient time to advise public bodies, and public bodies to implement any advice, ahead of the next reporting year. There may be biases in characteristics of those submitting reports sooner in the financial year, such as greater readiness for this way of working, greater motivation, or having a stronger commitment to the Act. However, earlier submissions could also be simply ensuring the requirement is checked off and as such providing minimal information.

There is also no set content for the reports, and so the comprehensiveness of the reports and what is covered will vary.

Another challenge when relying on these reports is regarding a gap between what happened in practice and what is reported. This is a challenge with any self-report. This is mitigated as the report must be agreed between employer and worker representatives.

5.3.2. Case study selection for public bodies

As there are 55 public bodies, a comprehensive evaluation of each would not be appropriate in terms of time and resources. As such, any future evaluator would need to select a sample. The challenge is that public bodies will be starting at different points in relation to the Act.

For the SPD, some are more established with existing structures and social partnership working, whereas others are earlier in their journey. Moreover, as time goes on there will be variations in 'distance travelled', with some making greater progress than others, even with similar starting places. The same applies to fair work in public bodies.

It will be important to ensure any sample for the SPD and fair work elements reflects these aspects, as well as different sectors and types of public bodies (national, regional, local). Therefore, any future evaluator would need to do exploratory work with advice from Welsh Government policy colleagues to draw together this information, to then sample from.

In the data workshop, examples were given about changes and progress in social partnership in certain public bodies. It would be useful for SPEFW officials to start to map historic context and starting places for all the public bodies and add to this as time progresses, so this information would be in place for the time of an evaluation.

5.3.3. Participation

For the SPD and fair work, data workshop participants discussed previous challenges with producing case studies. They highlighted cases that have shown an initial interest, but then reluctance when it comes to produce it. Participants suggested this could be because the case is concerned that they are not fully competent in every aspect or fully understand the Act. Participants suggested it should be highlighted that it is not about doing absolutely everything and doing it perfectly.

Though these are 'case studies' in terms of exemplars of practice or pieces of work, rather than research case studies, the same challenge could apply in the evaluation context. It will be important for a future evaluator to consider this potential recruitment barrier.

An alternative would be for an evaluator to take an observational approach to gather data on the SPD and fair work in public bodies. However, this poses its own set of challenges, including sensitivity or confidentiality of meetings, biases created from the evaluator being present (the Hawthorne effect), the large time and resource requirement, and again agreement to take part.

5.3.4. Expectations

Data and practicalities workshop participants raised that sometimes the messaging around the Act has been blurred, where some external stakeholders have high expectations about what the Act will deliver beyond the actual scope of what the Act sets out to do. Participants noted examples of this happening with trade unions for social partnership, and third sector organisations for procurement (see also discussion at Chapter 4, 4.1.2 (SPD SO2) and Chapter 4, 4.2.4 (SPC SO4)).

Therefore, some external stakeholders may have expectations about what an evaluation would show beyond the scope of what any evaluation would include, or beyond what is feasible to attribute to the Act specifically. A future evaluator should be aware of this piece of context.

5.3.5. External factors

5.3.5.1. Election Cycles

For the SPC, data workshop participants noted that the influence of the SPC is likely to be more limited at the later stages of a Senedd term in comparison with the start of a new term, when a new government is setting its programme.

This report was developed during the approach to the 2026 Senedd elections. For all elements of the Act, data and practicalities workshop participants stated that a change of government may impact conception of, approach to, and weight given to social partnership, fair work and socially responsible public procurement. Moreover, the areas the SPC are consulted on (budget, legislative programme and well-being objectives) as part of the SPD on Welsh Ministers is subject to change.

5.3.5.2. Wider legislation context

Practicalities workshop participants highlighted that the Act has a lot of cross-over with the WFG Act. Also, there is the UK Employment Rights Bill. For procurement, participants noted there are other pieces of UK government legislation, with secondary legislation made in Wales.

Social partners', public bodies' and contracting authorities' understanding of the different pieces of legislation, as well as how these all fit together, are factors that could also influence some of the outcomes relevant to the Act. Future evaluators need to be aware of this context.

5.3.5.3. Personnel

Changes in public bodies

In considering the 5-year period of the long-term outcomes for SPD, data workshop participants discussed senior leadership in public bodies is likely to be subject to moderate levels of change over this timeframe. This will create a challenge for evaluators when discussing changes in social partnership working over time. Worker representatives were thought to be more stable as they are elected to represent for specific terms.

Changes in leadership were also regarded as an external factor beyond the Act that could be attributed to many of the outcomes, including SPD and fair work. Changes in leadership will affect the weight given or attitudes to social partnership and fair work, and social partnership arrangements. Some organisations will have a culture of 'learning and improving' and so embrace the Act more.

Changes in the SPC

SPC members have a 3-year term, and the first term ends on the 30th of November 2026. This will impact measurement of outcomes because there will be a period where the new membership will need to get used to the processes. This may mean the achievement of the short- and medium-term outcomes become cyclic, in that progress is made and then resets while the new SPC members begin working together.

Moreover, the members of any previous SPC terms would be important to include in any future evaluation but may be difficult to engage once they have left the SPC.

Capacity and availability

Any other legislation coming into force such as pieces discussed under 'wider legislation context' would impact on the capacity of stakeholders to engage in evaluation activity, both in Welsh Government and externally.

Practicalities workshop participants also noted that senior leadership in public bodies and SPC members are two main groups that would be involved in evaluation but will have ongoing limited capacity. These factors would therefore need to be considered by any future evaluators when planning data collection.

5.3.5.4. Changes in finances

Data workshop participants discussed that pressures on public sector finances are another external factor beyond the Act that could influence many of the outcomes.

The financial context could make the environment for implementing the social partnership duty element of the Act more challenging, with pressures on relationships.

The financial context could also affect implementation of fair work in accordance with objectives. For instance, there can be a short-term and upfront cost to some practices, like the affordability of paying the Real Living Wage.

5.3.5.5. Changes in trade union attitudes

It was discussed that the way in which trade unions position themselves can change, such as in relation to 'election cycles', national trade union campaigns, or the 'changes in finances'. Again, this change in approach and attitude could affect social partnership working.

National trade union campaigns were also regarded as an external factor that could influence policymaking outside of the SPC and SPD.

6. Evaluation proposal

The evaluability assessment recommends a mixed-methods process evaluation and a theory-based impact evaluation.

The proposed evaluation approach is based on the findings of the ToC, data, and practicalities elements of this research. This research is based on an assessment of the SPD, SPC, and fair work components of the Act. However, the research findings indicate an evaluation should cover all elements of the Act: SPD, SPC, fair work and socially responsible public procurement. Therefore, where possible, proposals will be discussed considering this requirement.

During the practical elements component of the research, participants reported that the Act is principally about behaviour change. An evaluation would need to assess the extent to which the Act has contributed to changes in awareness, engagement, understanding and behaviours over time in accordance with what is outlined in the logic models.

Participants also stated that an evaluation would have a variety of end users. Principal end users are likely to include SPEFW officials, the Senedd and its committees, trade unions, the SPC, the procurement community and third sector organisations. It is likely that that different end users will be interested in different components of the evaluation (process or impact).

At the time of writing this report the 2026 Senedd elections were upcoming which creates challenges for the evaluability assessment. Firstly, a change in government may impact the approach to social partnership, fair work and procurement. The recommended evaluation options produced as part of this evaluability assessment are developed under the context at the time of writing. The extent to which this may need to be revised in any future context is not ascertainable. Secondly, it is not possible for SPEFW officials to estimate an evaluation budget. It is important to note any budget would be split between social partnership and fair work, and procurement, but this may not be even.

6.1. Process evaluation

A mixed methods process evaluation is recommended. The process evaluation should focus on the activities and outputs in the logic models for each component of the Act (SPD, SPC, fair work, and socially responsible public procurement). It should be noted that an evaluability assessment is a requirement for the socially responsible public procurement element of the Act. The procurement logic model will need reviewing and updating as part of this evaluability assessment, from which activities and outputs can be assessed.

In line with the [HM Treasury Magenta Book](#) a process evaluation would seek to answer questions such as:

- has delivery been as intended?
 - were there enough resources?
 - were there any unexpected issues in delivery?
 - how has the context influenced delivery?
- what worked well, or less well, for whom and why?
- what can be learned from the delivery methods used; what could be improved?

6.1.1. Process evaluation information gathering: SPD, SPC and fair work

The process evaluation would involve gathering and collating secondary evidence. The ToC should also be updated if necessary.

The SPD, SPC and fair work components of the Act do not involve the collection of monitoring data. Therefore, secondary data collection would rely on document records. The documents required to understand implementation of the activities and the outputs in the logic models cross over with those required to understand the outcomes discussed in Chapter 4. Records relevant to the process component of the evaluation include:

- public body SPD reports
- meeting minutes and documentation from social partnership meetings from public bodies, subject to public bodies' discretion to share
- public bodies' published well-being objectives and steps to achieve these for the 'A prosperous Wales' well-being goal, and annual progress reports
- records held by Welsh Government of information and advice from Welsh Ministers (via. the SPC), materials and engagement opportunities produced by the engagement team, and fair work resources; and records or examples of public body use where possible
- champions scheme records held by Welsh Government
- meeting minutes from the SPC and its subgroups held by Welsh Government
- records held by Welsh Government of SPC and subgroup outputs (including secretariat), such as papers produced, analysis of public bodies' SPD reports
- records held by Welsh Government of the information and advice the SPC has given to Welsh Ministers; where possible, records of where SPC advice has been used by Welsh Ministers in policy decision making
- SPD reports from Welsh Ministers (agreed with the SPC)
- records held by Welsh Government of the result of the SPC reviewing its own operation
- the 'Well-being of Wales' report and national indicators published by Welsh Government

Primary data collection would also be required. Again, the groups to involve in primary data collection overlap with those identified in outcomes measurement in Chapter 4. Therefore, this is likely to involve Welsh Government officials (including SPC secretariat), SPC and subgroup members, public body employer and worker representatives, and those in public bodies involved in the well-being objectives process.

6.2. Impact evaluation

The impact element of the evaluation is principally concerned with outcomes across each component of the Act (SPD, SPC, fair work and socially responsible procurement). In accordance with the [HM Treasury Magenta Book](#), the broad aims of impact evaluation should be to determine how and why impact occurred and establish what difference the intervention made.

The data component of the research identified the following priorities for outcomes:

- the extent to which the SPD has led to the embedding of social partnership principles in public bodies
- the extent to which fair work is referenced when public bodies are setting well-being objectives, and the steps taken to achieve these objectives
- the impact of the SPC's advice on social partnership arrangements in public bodies, and the value of jointly developed advice on specific topics

The data component of the research also identified that case studies would be a suitable method to ascertain outcomes.

The following discussion regarding evaluation approaches concerns the SPD, SPC and fair work components only. An evaluability assessment of socially responsible public procurement is required to ascertain the most appropriate impact evaluation approach.

To determine which approach would be most suitable for the impact component of an evaluation for SPD, SPC and fair work, HM Treasury's Magenta Book was reviewed in the first instance. Based on the guidance, experimental and quasi-experimental approaches would not be suitable because it will not be possible to compare affected and unaffected groups. Therefore, it was determined that a theory-based approach would be most appropriate.

The theory-based approaches listed in the HM Treasury Magenta Book (and its [annex A providing further information about the approaches](#)) were reviewed for their strengths and weaknesses and their suitability based on information gathered during the ToC, data, and practicalities research stages. Resources about evaluation approaches from '[Better Evaluation](#)' were also used in reviewing the approaches. The following information within the 'approach selection' subheadings (6.2.1, 6.2.2) are drawn from these references.

6.2.1. Approach selection: theory-based approaches that were assessed to be less suitable

6.2.1.1. Contribution analysis

Do the research questions the approach seeks to answer and its core aims match the priorities of the Act's evaluation?

Contribution analysis is dependent on a ToC. This has been developed as part of this evaluability assessment.

Contribution analysis can be used for complex interventions, which is suitable.

Contribution analysis seeks to make a 'contribution' claim, which is understanding the likelihood that an intervention (the Act) has contributed to observed results (outcomes). It posits that outcomes are influenced by a causal package, which an intervention would be part of, but it will not be the sole factor producing the outcome. It seeks to identify what role the intervention plays within this package in influencing the observed outcomes, giving a level of confidence about its contribution. This is suitable in terms of understanding the many external factors identified as influencing some of the outcomes in this evaluability assessment.

However, the core behaviours expected of public bodies and the SPC are legislated, and as such making a 'contribution claim' is not as suitable. Moreover, it is not advised to be used when there is a large degree of variance in implementation or an expectation of different outcomes across groups. While core behaviours are legislated, public bodies will all have different processes in how this is implemented, and so again this may not be suitable.

Do the methods used as part of the approach suit the primary and secondary data sources for the Act?

The methods are suitable. Contribution analysis is described as an approach that can use a broad range of evidence types. Typically, it starts with using existing documents and then uses any primary collection method for the data required.

Do the resources for the approach align with what is known about resources for the Act's evaluation?

The resource requirements do not align. Contribution analysis is resource intensive. It requires an iterative evaluation design to test the logic models and alternative explanations. This requires time and resource from stakeholders that is not suitable in these circumstances due to the limited capacity anticipated.

Conclusion

Contribution analysis is not recommended.

6.2.1.2. Process tracing, Bayesian updating, contribution tracing

Process tracing and Bayesian updating are specific casual inference methods which can be combined with contribution analysis. They are methods used as part of understanding the 'contribution claim'. Contribution tracing is also an approach which applies Bayesian updating to establish the validity of 'contribution claims'. As such, these approaches are not recommended.

6.2.1.3. Outcome harvesting

Do the research questions the approach seeks to answer and its core aims match the priorities of the Act's evaluation?

Outcome harvesting is not recommended when the intervention closely follows a ToC. This does not align with the Act.

Outcome harvesting seeks to identify the changes brought about by an intervention (outcomes). These could be positive, negative, intended and unintended. The connection between the intervention and the outcome is to be verified. Outcome harvesting starts with collecting evidence of change and works backwards to assess contributions. It is particularly useful where unintended outcomes dominate; there is less certainty about what will change.

Its use is suggested when the focus is primarily on outcomes rather than activities, which is not the case for the evaluation of the Act. It is also typically used for ongoing monitoring to produce real-time information. This does not apply to the Act's evaluation due to the intended evaluation timing of 5 years post implementation.

Do the methods used as part of the approach suit the primary and secondary data sources for the Act?

Outcome harvesting is described as using documents and interviews as sources of information, which aligns with what is suitable for the Act's evaluation.

Do the resources for the approach align with what is known about resources for the Act's evaluation?

The resource requirements do not align. Outcome harvesting is resource intensive, with cyclical steps. It requires an iterative, participatory approach with high levels of involvement from both users of the evaluation findings and those involved in the intervention itself. This requires time and resource from stakeholders that is not suitable for the Act's evaluation due to the limited capacity anticipated, and due to who the evaluation users are.

Conclusion

Outcome harvesting is not recommended.

6.2.1.4. Most significant change (MSC)

Do the research questions the approach seeks to answer and its core aims match the priorities of the Act's evaluation?

MSC involves collecting 'change stories' about specific changes or outcomes and then determining which are most significant with panels of stakeholders. As MSC is mostly about identifying what is valued by different stakeholders, this does not align with the needs for the Act's evaluation which is to understand the behaviour change.

It is also typically used in regular monitoring cycles which does not apply to the Act's evaluation due to the intended evaluation timing of 5 years post implementation.

Do the methods used as part of the approach suit the primary and secondary data sources for the Act?

An MSC approach uses personal narratives of changes they have seen, which are selected purposefully to represent different groups or types of issue. This is a bespoke method for the MSC approach.

Do the resources for the approach align with what is known about resources for the Act's evaluation?

The resource requirements do not align. MSC is described as "time consuming and resource intensive". Stakeholders are involved in identification and analysis of change stories. The process has several cycles. This requires time and resource from stakeholders that is not suitable for the Act's evaluation.

Conclusion

MSC is not recommended.

6.2.1.5. Realist

The [HM Treasury realist evaluation guide](#) was also reviewed.

Do the research questions the approach seeks to answer and its core aims match the priorities of the Act's evaluation?

A realist evaluation seeks to understand what works, for whom, and in what circumstances.

It posits that outcomes are due to people making decisions; choosing to act in response to the resources and opportunities of the intervention. This is the mechanism. Also, that the response will be different in different circumstances. This is the context.

A series of 'context + mechanism = outcome' hypothesis statements are generated, using the programme theory and causal chains. Evidence is gathered for each statement. The programme theory is then refined according to how the context affects outcomes and what the mechanisms may be. This is a cyclical approach.

Realist evaluation could therefore be useful to understand why there is variation in outcomes across public bodies, or why the SPC has achieved certain outcomes. This could provide insight to help improve embedding of the Act.

However, the purpose of a realist evaluation is as much to refine the programme theory as it is to understand the outcomes. This does not align with the priorities and intended use of the evaluation. Moreover, the legislated for behaviours remove a degree of the 'choice to act' component of a realist evaluation.

Do the methods used as part of the approach suit the primary and secondary data sources for the Act?

Realist evaluation is described as 'method neutral' for data collection and analysis. It is however described that a case study approach with purposive sampling is typically used to enable testing of the programme theory. This aligns with the data and information described for the evaluation of the Act.

However, it is also described that quantitative data are typically used to assess outcomes, which is largely not available for the Act and only applies to a few outcomes.

Do the resources for the approach align with what is known about resources for the Act's evaluation?

Realist evaluation is described as time consuming and resource intensive. It is not recommended where "the human and financial resources required to undertake a realist evaluation are not available". Capacity from stakeholders was a challenge identified for the Act's evaluation. Also, the budget is unknown.

Conclusion

A realist evaluation could be suitable but is not recommended.

6.2.2. Approach selection: Qualitative Comparative Analysis

Using a Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) inspired approach was deemed to be the most appropriate for a future impact evaluation for the SPD, SPC and fair work.

QCA compares multiple case studies to understand factors that are associated with desired and undesired outcomes based on qualitative data. This is relevant to the impact evaluation of the Act because the evaluation should draw on qualitative data from a selection of public body case studies to assess the extent to which the Act has contributed to behaviour changes relating to social partnership and fair work. Also, a selection of case studies of areas of advice of the SPC and its subgroups.

QCA is also a relevant method because it can account for multiple causation factors, including contextual and external factors that may affect outcomes. This is relevant as participants during the data and practicalities workshops noted there are numerous external factors which may affect outcomes for the SPC, SPD, and fair work components of the Act. A QCA approach is also suitable because it is likely that the types of data will be consistent across case studies which means it becomes possible to assess how different factors affect outcomes and identify which factors contribute to successful outcomes.

QCA is described as suitable for around 10 to 50 cases. However, the number of case studies to be used in an evaluation based on the QCA method will need to be determined at a later date. This is because, as participants noted in the data workshop, each public body is starting from a different point in terms of working in social partnership. This means that it will only be possible to decide upon a suitable number and selection of case studies once closer to the evaluation being commissioned because it will then be known how different public bodies have progressed and so what constitutes a representative sample. Equally, different subgroups and topics of SPC advice will have emerged. Considerations for case study selection were discussed at Chapter 5, 'Case study selection for public bodies'.

The reason why the recommendation is to use a 'QCA inspired' approach is that QCA traditionally uses scoring within a 'truth table' to determine whether factors that contribute to outcomes are present or not present. It is suggested this scoring element is not used in the evaluation. It can "be difficult to determine which cases represent more 'success' or 'failure' than others" ([HM Treasury Magenta Book](#)). Instead, it is suggested an approach to handle multiple cases similar to a 'matrix of categories' ([Better Evaluation: Case study evaluations, US General Accounting Office](#)) is used. This would similarly allow identification of factors affecting outcomes and contributing to successful outcomes but without reducing qualitative data to quantitative data and to fully capture any nuance. This would also avoid over-simplifying any attribution issues. Finally, to ensure presentation of findings is understandable to a non-research audience, rather than a set of 'truth tables' and configuration statements, which is important due to the intended users of the evaluation.

6.2.3. Impact evaluation information gathering: SPD, SPC and fair work

The impact evaluation would involve gathering and collating secondary evidence. The ToC would not need further updating if this was completed at the process stage. The documents and data identified to assess outcomes are listed at Chapter 4, 'Summary across logic model outcomes'. Findings from the process evaluation should also be considered, and any additional secondary evidence that emerges.

The impact evaluation would also involve primary data collection using methods as deemed suitable, such as one-to-one interviews, focus groups, and surveys. Those to involve in fieldwork are listed at Chapter 4, 'Summary across logic model outcomes'.

Together, the primary and secondary evidence would be used to form case studies, as part of the QCA approach.

6.3. Evaluation timings

6.3.1. Procurement evaluability assessment: late 2026 or early 2027

Procurement provisions are expected to fully come into force in April 2026. The evaluability assessment for the socially responsible procurement element could be conducted around late 2026 to early 2027. This is so logic models can reflect what is happening in practice and to allow for internal capacity to engage in research.

Together with this evaluability assessment of the SPD, SPC and fair work components of the Act, the findings of the evaluability assessment should inform the specification for the process and impact evaluations of the Act.

6.3.2. Evaluation phase 1, process: 2029

As discussed at section 5.2.2, participants stated that the earliest start time for an evaluation would be 2029. This would mean starting in the Welsh Government financial year April 2028 to March 2029, into April 2029 to March 2030.

Where possible, it is important that all elements of the Act are evaluated at the same time because of the links between social partnership, fair work and socially responsible procurement. The evaluation should start with a process evaluation of all components of the Act.

By starting in 2029, the social partnership and fair work elements would have been implemented for around 5 years, and the procurement elements for around 3 years. Therefore, this would still allow sufficient time for procurement processes to bed in for the purposes of a process evaluation. Moreover, there would be sufficient time for the second SPC membership to have settled into their roles as they would be in their final year of their membership.

Typically, a process evaluation is earlier in implementation to allow for learnings to be applied. It is however accepted this is not feasible in these circumstances due to the disparity in timing of implementation between the procurement provisions and the social partnership and fair work provisions, the current uncertainty around budget, and that the budget would be from separate areas but combined. The proposed timeframe would still allow learnings to be applied from the process element and then evaluated as part of subsequent impact evaluations.

6.3.3. Evaluation phase 2a and 2b, impact: from 2030

It is recommended that the impact evaluations should take a staggered approach.

Phase 2a could start in mid to late 2030. This would involve a QCA impact evaluation of the SPD, SPC and fair work components of the Act. Starting this evaluation at this time would allow sufficient time for the insights from the phase 1 process evaluation to be incorporated and assessed. It would also provide sufficient time for the long-term outcomes to emerge and be evaluated, as they are expected to become apparent 5 years after implementation has begun.

It is anticipated that some outcomes relating to socially responsible procurement will be visible at phase 2a, but it is necessary to allow sufficient time for these changes to develop and be recorded in the annual procurement reports. Therefore, it is recommended that the procurement element of the impact evaluation could commence in early to mid 2031, as phase 2b.

This is because the procurement provisions are expected to fully come into force in April 2026. This means it will be 2031 before the long-term outcomes for this element of the Act begin to manifest. It is currently unknown whether QCA would be a suitable approach to evaluate procurement impacts, however initial discussions suggest procurement may have more quantitative data available, which may lend itself to another approach. The evaluation approach should be informed by any evaluability assessment of the Act's procurement component.

This may appear to diverge from the premise that all elements of the Act are to be evaluated at the same time because of the links between social partnership, fair work and socially responsible procurement. However, the points where procurement outcomes cross over with the other components can be identified, and the findings at phase 2a can be combined with the findings from phase 2b to create a summative evaluation. For example, at the proposed phase 2a timing, the medium-term procurement outcomes should be visible, and as such the outcomes of the SPC procurement subgroup could still be captured. Fair work within procurement from the fair work logic model may be better measured at phase 2b, as these largely refer to procurement reports and objectives.

6.4. Alternative option

The recommended approach would involve a multi-stage process and impact evaluation as described so far in Chapter 6. This would provide robust information about implementation and impact as part of a coherent evaluation package.

However, if the budget is not in line with this, a stand-alone process or impact evaluation could provide some insights.

A stand-alone process evaluation could provide actionable information about whether the Act is being implemented as intended, and enablers, constraints and contextual factors affecting delivery. This information could help to improve embedding of the Act. It would not be able to systematically detail what changes the Act has led to (its impact).

A stand-alone impact evaluation would seek to systematically detail the changes the Act has led to. A theory-based approach would provide information about what changes have taken place and why. Depending on time and budget it is likely a smaller selection of outcomes would be considered. A smaller sample of case studies would need to be undertaken which would provide a narrower qualitative dataset.

Either process or impact could be chosen depending on priority. Or these could both be chosen but be commissioned individually at times where budget is in place. However, this piecemeal approach would require additional internal resource for two procurement exercises. It would also reduce coherence and challenge in creating a summative report as there could be a different supplier for the different evaluations, and a longer time gap between the evaluations. This could be further complicated through requiring different approaches for social partnership and fair work compared to procurement for impact evaluation.

6.5. Recommendations to support a future evaluation

6.5.1. Logic models

Recommendation 1: Undertake an evaluability assessment of procurement element. This includes updating the logic model from 2023 and identifying the main areas that link to the SPD, SPC and fair work logic models.

Recommendation 2: At the point of the future evaluation (process stage), make any final iteration of the social partnership, fair work and procurement logic models and ToC as necessary.

6.5.2. Data

Recommendation 3: The data section in this report outlines various pieces of documentation that would be held by Welsh Government. The documents mentioned throughout the section are listed at Chapter 4, 'Summary across logic model outcomes'. This information should begin to be (where not already) collected by SPEFW officials. It should be stored and tracked over time, so that at the point of evaluation it can easily be collated and accessed.

Recommendation 4: The data section in this report outlines various groups to involve in primary data collection. The groups mentioned throughout the section are listed at Chapter 4, 'Summary across logic model outcomes'. SPEFW officials may need to do some outreach and engagement work to understand who within public bodies is involved in their social partnership structures and processes, fair work, and well-being objectives processes. Any changes in personnel over time would be important to understand and log, as many outcomes are about distance travelled and evolution over time. A future evaluator will need this list of contacts to ascertain who to invite to research activities.

Recommendation 5: At the point of the future evaluation, the evaluator would need to scope the feasibility of public bodies sharing data. This includes meeting minutes and documentation from social partnership meetings and metrics such as staff well-being, turnover, strikes and disciplinaries.

6.5.3. Resources

Recommendation 6: Explore the feasibility of recruiting a Welsh Government analyst to manage the contract for the evaluation.