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[Home](#) > Dame Shan Morgan - Category Champion for The Inspirational Leadership Award



Shan took up post as Welsh Government Permanent Secretary in February 2017.

Shan's early career focussed on employment and social affairs policy. After graduating in French from Kent University in 1977, she joined the Employment Department, working on youth and adult employment policy and on vocational education and training programmes in the Manpower Services Commission. Shan was seconded to the European Commission in Brussels (DG Employment & Social Affairs) from 1984 - 1987 to work on long term unemployment policy and local economic development (the LEDA programme). On return to the UK, she held a variety of posts in the Employment Department, dealing with labour market policy, including in the National Training Task Force and the Government Office for London.

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