



Comisiynydd
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Cymru

**Future
Generations**
Commissioner
for Wales

The Future Generations Report 2020: Executive Summaries



Let's create the future together

A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language



“A society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language and which encourages people to participate in the arts, and sports and recreation.”

Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act (2015)

When we talk about culture in this section, we refer to the arts, archives, heritage, language, literature, libraries, museums, religion, play, sport, recreational activities, and creative industries in Wales.

Welsh language is not simply a means of communication – it is an intrinsic part of who we are as a nation, our culture and our way of life.

Culture is part of the DNA of Wales. We were ahead of the rest of the world when we put culture at the forefront of our approach to sustainable development by introducing it as one of the statutory dimensions of the Well-being of Future Generations Act.



Some of our 2020 Future Generations Leadership Academy Cohort at the Wales Millennium Centre



Policy Recommendations

Welsh Government should ensure that its cultural agencies including CADW, Visit Wales, Creative Wales and national bodies like Arts Council of Wales, National Museum Wales and the National Library are working together to better make the connections between how culture and language are addressing the climate and nature emergencies. The sector should be supported in this work by all government departments and wider public services.

Welsh Government should...

Put long term funding commitments in place to support cultural development and the creative industries across Wales.

Ensure the revised national culture strategy is aligned with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and fully reflects the sustainable development principle.

Ensure that the Welsh language is fully mainstreamed into all Welsh Government policies, guidance and strategies.

Develop clear, sustainable pathways for people to access and achieve success in the cultural professions.

Ensure adequate funding for the Welsh language in order to reach the 2050 Strategy targets.

Develop a large scale approach to ensuring cultural facilities, programmes and venues are accessible to staff, audiences, participants and cultural professionals; including specific capital pots in place to deal with overarching building developments that are needed.

Develop cultural partnerships akin to the Fusion/Cyfuno model to support skill development and employability. Consider how this could support the national mission in education, set out in the section on Skills in Chapter 5.

Demonstrate that investment in culture is considered important; social return on investment is understood and money is invested in the prevention agenda to support this.

Develop a national strategic communications campaign to promote the benefits of culture on the wider determinants of health.

Lead on a cultural landscape partnership programme between cultural and environmental sectors with innovative approaches developed to mitigate key issues identified.

Develop cultural corridors across Wales that encourage public, private and voluntary sectors to connect cultural and creative sites, programmes and institutions to widen well-being opportunities, reach and prosperity.

Find a way to secure the development of statues of five Welsh women through appropriate Welsh Government funded infrastructure programmes.



Advice on setting well-being objectives for all public bodies and boards covered by the Well-being of Future Generations Act (including Welsh Government)

Please refer to the chapter on Setting Good Well-being Objectives, but in setting their objectives specifically in relation to this goal, all public bodies and boards covered by the Act should:

- Ensure that the dimension of cultural well-being is integrated with other objectives, in particular to address health and inequalities.
- Go beyond statutory requirements when setting objectives relating to culture and Welsh language.
- Clearly set out how they understand the definition of the goal: 'A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language'.
- Involve arts, language and culture practitioners and organisations in setting their objectives and steps.

In setting their **steps**, public bodies and boards covered by the Well-being of Future Generations Act (including Welsh Government) should focus in the following areas and should:

- Develop skills, increase opportunities and respect our status as a bilingual nation.
- Support people to engage with culture in their daily working and recreational lives and bring out the best in our cultural professionals.
- Use cultural and linguistic interventions to address wider societal issues.
- Use culture and the Welsh language as a driver for economic and environmental change.
- Enable our citizens to access and engage with their own and other cultures.



“How can the presence of something like Future Generations be a radical question not just to culture as we know it as cultural practitioners, as artists, as companies and organisations but the very culture we currently have in society which is broken? It’s not going to last, and we’re not going to survive it unless we actually make much deeper, deeper questions of how government, governance and public bodies function around the distribution of wealth, the distribution of equity around power and privilege”.

Our Future Wales conversation, Culture Roundtable



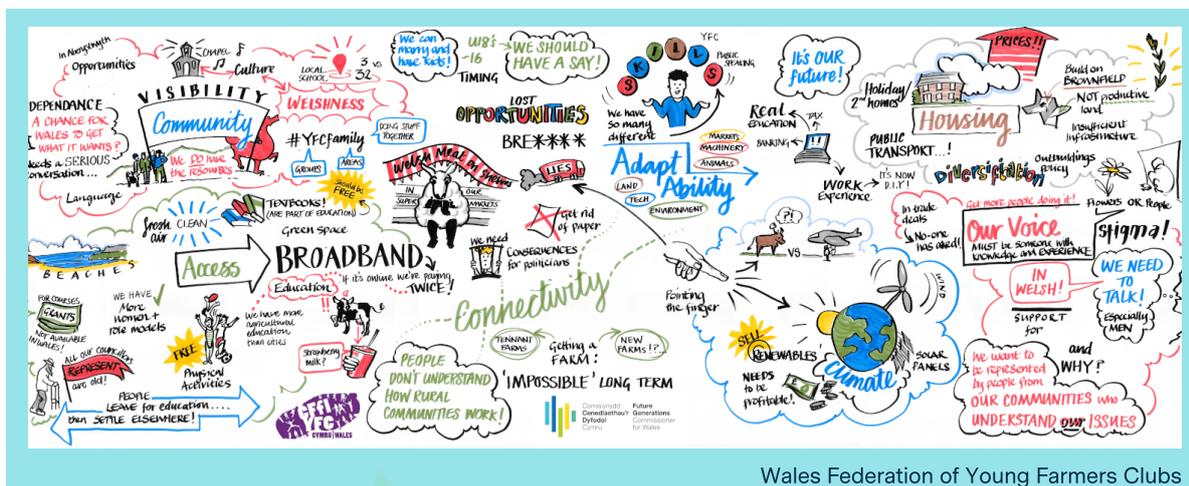
Where are we now? My assessment of progress in achieving A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language:

The target of a million speakers and an increase in those who speak Welsh daily to 20% by 2050 is an ambitious policy, but more action across all public bodies is needed to achieve this target.

For example, we need more clearly-defined duties set through legislation, a far-reaching strategy to increase the number of teachers teaching through the medium of Welsh, ensuring that people who come to live in Wales from abroad have opportunities to learn Welsh and making Welsh classes affordable and accessible for all.

The Welsh language must play a full part in the latest technological developments to ensure that it remains a modern language used in all aspects of everyday life.

For example, the development of conversational Artificial Intelligence for the Welsh language; using the new curriculum and the Hwb website to develop children’s and young people’s skills in digital literacy, coding and digital content creation in Welsh; support workshops that ensure people create and publish video, audio, image and text content in Welsh; applications and online Welsh language lessons.



Wales Federation of Young Farmers Clubs

Public bodies' objectives and steps do not always meet the level of ambition needed to achieve this goal and are not demonstrating sufficiently how they will contribute to the national target of a million speakers and an increase in those who speak Welsh daily to 20% by 2050.

Of the objectives that do mention Welsh language, most refer to the Welsh Language Standards or the statutory duty on public bodies to promote and protect the language. For example, Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and the Vale of Glamorgan councils, and Amgueddfa Cymru all have steps within their objectives to 'Implement the Welsh Language Standards.'

Welsh Government is continuing to show political will and determination to improve and promote the Welsh language but more needs to be done to address the loss of Welsh language skills when young people move beyond statutory education.

Policies such as Cymraeg 2050 (the strategy for the promotion and facilitation of the use of the Welsh language, which sets out the Welsh Government's long-term approach to achieving the target of a million Welsh speakers by 2050) and the National policy on Welsh language transmission and use in families (which aims to inspire children and young people to speak Welsh to their children in the future; reignite the Welsh language skills of those who may not have used Welsh since their school days, or who have lost confidence in their language skills, to speak Welsh with their children; support and encourage the use of Welsh within families, where not everybody speaks Welsh; and to support Welsh-speaking families to speak Welsh with their children) are helping raise the profile of the Welsh language.

Eluned Morgan AM's Our Future Wales Response (which stated that investing in the Welsh language and audience insight research to learn more about the public's behaviours and attitudes towards the language) also reaffirmed Welsh Government's ambition for the language. However, efforts need to be scaled up as many young people lose their Welsh language skills when they move from statutory education to further or higher education and current Welsh Government projections based on the 2011 Census show that if efforts to promote the Welsh language are not increased, we will have around 666,000, rather than one million Welsh speakers by 2050.

Areas such as broadcasting and online streaming sites are non-devolved, but demand for Welsh culture and language is increasing. Welsh Government should further explore opportunities to use these platforms to share Welsh culture and language with wider audiences across the world.

Welsh Government are able to show some evidence on how they are supporting the cultural economy but need to ensure they are applying principles of sustainable development across all policies in this area.

There are good examples such as the establishment of Creative Wales; successes in showcasing Wales' cultural work internationally at the Smithsonian Folklife Festival, Wales in Venice, Wales at London Book Fair, and Lorient Interceltic Festival in Brittany to name a few; and providing additional capital funding for the Books Council of Wales. However, more can be done as, for example, Creative Wales' plan does not make any reference to meeting the aspirations of the Well-being of Future Generations Act.



Our natural environment is a key part of Wales' tourism offering. Welsh Government must therefore demonstrate how its Tourism Strategy and support for major events are enhancing biodiversity and contributing to carbon reduction.

Creativity's importance is recognised in the new curriculum by Welsh Government, but more needs to be done to promote this skill as part of lifelong learning and into current workforces.

Currently people feel culture is not always valued as it should be in education. The Curriculum for Wales 2022 is a positive first step, with a focus on softer skills, including creativity. The benefits of the new curriculum will only be realised if it is implemented fully, and with teachers prepared (personally and professionally) to deliver its challenging requirements. This involves working differently; involving a broader range of people in education. (Please see the section on Skills in Chapter 5 for more information.)

Funding to support cultural assets, production and delivery is not always seen as essential and can be the first thing to go when budgets are considered by public bodies.

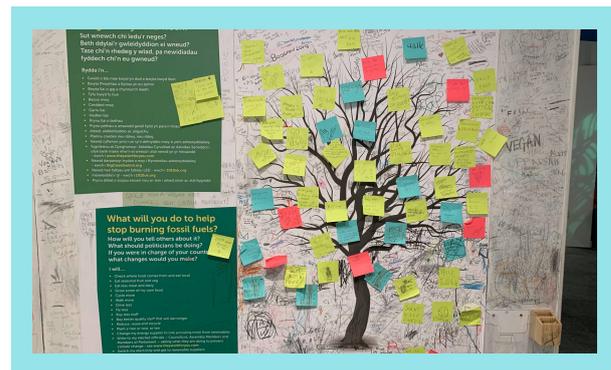
Public funding of the arts in Wales decreased by 18% between 2011-12 and 2017-18; a third of libraries in Wales have closed or changed hands since 2010 due to budget cuts; the Arts Council for Wales report for 2018-19 has identified cuts in public sector funding as one of the critical risks that could lead to key cultural organisations - failing.

Not enough public bodies have set objectives and steps in relation to this goal and those who do are not always making the connections between culture and language and their other objectives, for example, ones related to health and decarbonisation.

The three national park authorities and Natural Resources Wales are ahead of others in recognising the positive impact of culture on other aspects of well-being. They are using culture and language as a preventative mechanism, thereby addressing wider issues related to the environment and health. However, the majority of public bodies have taken a narrower approach and focused their objectives and steps in a specific area of culture (such as language, sport or the arts) rather than looking at how culture can integrate with other sectors.

Public bodies are also starting to recognise that culture is a powerful tool that can help raise awareness of environmental challenges, but a more coordinated approach is needed in order to scale up the many examples across Wales.

Good examples include Natural Resources Wales' partnership with Ford to plant trees in old mining areas; Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority's initiatives and projects designed to raise awareness and tackle climate change through the medium of culture; EGIN - a two-week residency responding to climate change, held in the northern reaches of Snowdonia National Park; Head4Arts' annual free family-friendly events to celebrate Earth Hour.



Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority's initiatives and projects designed to raise awareness and tackle climate change through the medium of culture present another good example, demonstrating that culture is one of the most powerful tools we can use to prompt thought and help address wider societal issues. I'd like to see more public bodies follow Pembrokeshire's example.

- The Artist in Residence in Oriol y Parc Landscape Gallery and Visitor Centre prepared an [exhibition on climate change](#);
- The authority [commissioned interactive wildlife sculptures](#) to help raise awareness of marine litter;
- [The Changing Coast Project](#) is encouraging people to take photos from one of the park's fixed-point photography posts and share them with the authority, in order to document coastal change in Pembrokeshire.

The importance of culture for the improvement of health and well-being is being increasingly acknowledged by public bodies, and there are some innovative programmes being delivered and they should be identified, shared and scaled up.

For example, Snowdonia National Park Authority's project "Literature Reach" (which enabled six mental health clients, ten elderly people and eight Gysda clients to participate in arts activities in the outdoors and at heritage sites, including visual arts, poetry and music); Cardiff and the Vale University Health Board's "Arts for Health and Well-being" (focused on using art and culture to improve the patient experience);

Hywel Dda Health Board and the National Library's "Living Memory" project (which uses the library's visual collections for therapeutic purposes); The National Library's "Wici" project (aimed at improving Welsh-medium health-related information); Denbigshire Council's "Lost in the Arts" project (a visual arts project for people living with dementia and their carers).

The culture and sport community recognise their role in meeting a range of well-being objectives, but this is not always sufficiently acted upon by public bodies who can better demonstrate the link between these areas and prevention within objectives and steps.

Some public bodies are recognising the importance of sport and physical activity for health and are starting to consider the wider role this sector can play, which is encouraging. However, many public bodies are missing opportunities to see sport and physical activity as a lever for meeting objectives beyond the more obvious improvements to health. Other than Public Health Wales, there is little evidence within objectives and steps that health bodies are discussing this goal (including sport) in a preventative way. Most of the objectives and steps seem to be related only to treating people who are already unwell.

The response to the COVID-19 crisis is triggering a greater appreciation of the role of culture and sport and innovative ways of involving people.

Culture is beneficial to our mental well-being, especially in moments of stress and isolation. Fortunately, through technological advancement, culture can now be consumed and experienced at home. For example, National Museum Wales have made their collections available online. They have also developed several online learning sources that can help parents with home-schooling their children. National Library for Wales has made many of their resources accessible online, without registration. This has been a lifeline for many during the COVID-19 crisis.



A greater focus on access to culture and the promotion of cultural equality and justice is needed by public bodies.

Public bodies in Wales should use their well-being objectives and steps to address inequalities. There are many great programmes in Wales helping to reduce inequalities and make culture easily accessible and relevant to everyone, such as St Fagan's National Museum of History holding a Refugee Wales exhibition; Cardiff Story Museum working with Syrian refugees to create a community space and tell the story of Cardiff as a city built on migration; Welsh National Opera outreach programme - making opera more accessible to communities through free and accessible family concerts and interactive opera days.

Literature Wales has several amazing programmes that contribute to this and many of the other well-being goals. They:

- Have a [scheme](#) for the development of under-represented Wales-based writers from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds, and writers with a disability or illness (mental or physical)
- Announced an [investment](#) which aims to encourage engagement and inclusion in communities across Wales
- Have a programme, [Reading Friends](#), aimed to start conversations and get people chatting, especially vulnerable and isolated older people, people with dementia and same-generation carers
- Organised weekly creative writing [sessions](#) with writer Mike Church at the home of the Ospreys, Liberty Stadium, which inspired the participants to create their own stories in the form of a video and a book

National Theatre Wales, in partnership with Natural Resources Wales and with support from the National Trust, British Council Wales and Snowdonia National Park organised [EGIN](#) - a two-week residency responding to climate change, held in the northern reaches of Snowdonia National Park, drawing on the inspiring Welsh landscape and its complex social history, together with insight from active local communities.

An example of developing Welsh language within education was on a recent [Lead Creative Schools project](#). Pupils at [Ysgol Y Traeth](#) collaborated with artist Catrin Williams and author Lowri Cooke, to explore different foods available in their local area. This experience helped pupils' confidence in speaking Welsh but also provided an opportunity to explore their local culture. One impact of this was an increase in pupils' awareness of the social use of the Welsh language on a local level, as well as supporting local business and valuing local produce.



Below are the areas I recommend that all public bodies, including Welsh Government, should focus on:

- Support the Welsh language
- Value culture and creativity as a core dimension of well-being
- View culture as a mechanism for wider change
- Ensure culture is available to all

For my full evidence, assessment, key findings and advice please see the section on A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language in Chapter 3: Progress against the well-being goals of the Future Generations Report.

