

# Future Generations Newsletter May 2022



## Foreword



*1 - Sophie Howe, Future Generations Commissioner for Wales*

I have outlined on many occasions, that I have long wanted to increase the support and guidance I provide to public bodies which previously I've only been able to do to a limited extent.

Earlier this month my Office took the opportunity to gather together representatives from public bodies and supporting organisations in one place to share learning about the Well-being of Future Generations Act and shine a light on good practice.

The event saw more than 100 attendees and was both inspiring and informative—its findings will form a foundation for the work of my Office going forward.

**In short, much good work has been done but there is still a great deal more to do if we wish to achieve our aim of saving the planet from irreversible harm.**

Over the past year we have tried a new approach of allocating each public body a named contact from within my team who has hosted a number of discussions around what has been done to implement the Act and the barriers and challenges along the way.

This month's public body event offered the chance to feedback the results from the pilot, to share a proposed model of ongoing support and to sense-check that this is the most effective way to achieving impact together.

I am not the only one offering support on implementing the Act, and the event also provided the chance to hear from partner organisations on their offers of support including the Welsh Government, Academi Wales, the Welsh Local Government Association, Natural Resources Wales, Public Health Wales and the NHS Confederation.

While we could have chosen any number of excellent examples to come out of the discussions with my Office, we focussed on three case studies on the day – with presentations from Amanda Davies (Swansea Bay University Health Board), Helen Lucocq (Brecon Beacons National Park Authority) and Helen Goddard (Conwy County Borough Council). They shared the inspirational work they are doing

on tackling bed poverty in Swansea and further afield, place-making in the Brecon Beacons and culture in Conwy.

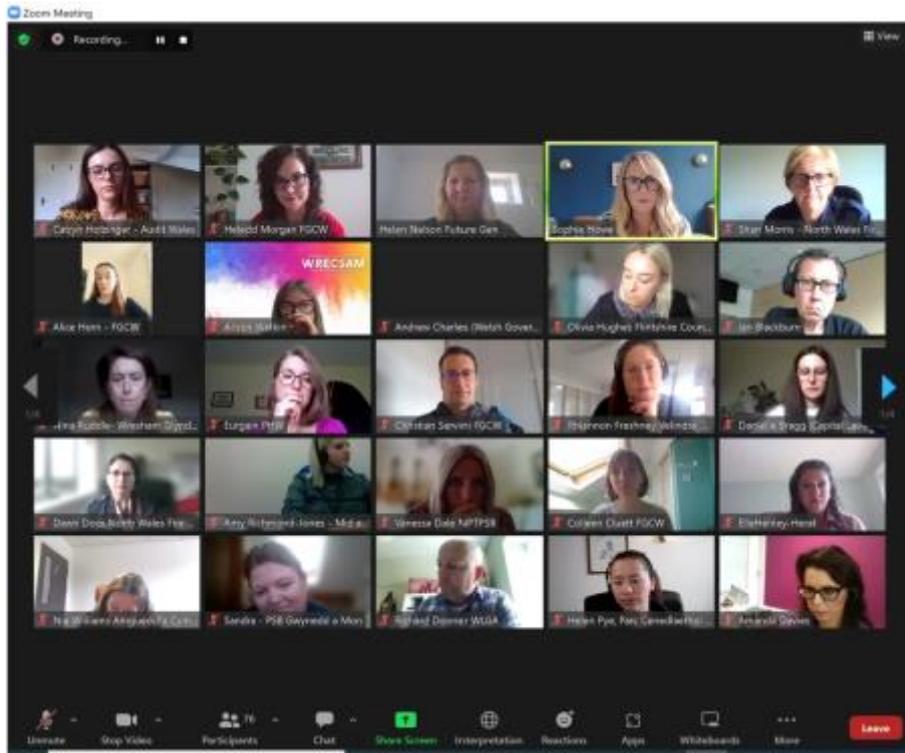


The event also featured two breakout sessions – the first looked the way in which individual organisations are applying the ways of working while the second session featured a conversation with public bodies on how my team and other organisations in this space provide practical support.

In summary this will be:

- Maintaining named contacts
- Providing training
- Responding to requests
- Monitoring and assessing progress
- Influencing leadership
- Convening people
- Gathering and sharing practice
- Advising PSBs

Both break out sessions generated some fantastic and productive discussions which will continue to feed into our joint efforts to embed the Act across the public sector.



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“Thanks all, great connections and learning”.\*

“Thank you to the FGC team for bringing us together.”\*

“Thank you for the meeting, it has been very beneficial and informative.”\*

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\* *Quotes from attendees post-event.*

If you would like to find out more about the Public Body event or would like to be added to our database of invitees for future events please contact us at: [contactus@futuregenerations.wales](mailto:contactus@futuregenerations.wales)

A call to make brave decisions: responding to well-being assessments and looking ahead

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“Our challenge is to make the Act part of our DNA in Wales.”

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As I outlined at this month's key Public Body event, my Office has also just finished responding to the second round of public services board (PSB) well-being assessments.

PSBs improve joint working across all public services in each local authority area in Wales. Our Office is a statutory consultee and we have provided individualised advice to 14 PSBs.

The efforts of PSBs have to be commended and I am reassured to see more effort to join things up and demonstrate integration; better analysis of future trends since the first round; and a concerted effort to involve communities – particularly by those PSBs who have been supported by [the Co-Production Network](#).

It's also reassuring to see PSBs demonstrate a greater understanding of the climate and nature emergency, provide better analysis of cultural well-being and explore other areas such as the wider determinants of health and the importance of green and blue spaces on our well-being in detail.

**The pandemic also saw unprecedented levels of collaboration and I've been told by many well-being champions that they want this collaboration (and the less bureaucratic way of working) to continue.**





But the assessments also exposed areas where we need to be moving **much faster** towards our goals. And assessments are just the start of a much harder job to take action.

For example, nearly every part of Wales has declared some sort of climate or nature emergency - which is brilliant - BUT it is only a gesture when 80% of public bodies do not have decarbonisation plans in place.

We're also seeing the effects of a lack of focus on prevention and long-term thinking. The cost of living remains a challenge that is likely to get worse. But this crisis has long been predicted and more could have been done to help prevent the severity of its impact.

If we had been more purposeful and braver with our investment in renewable energy and retrofitting our homes, it's likely we wouldn't be seeing the same cost of living crisis as we are now, and we'd have less people worried about heating their homes and putting food on the table.

This needs to be a stark reminder that the decisions public bodies and Government make - or do not make - have a direct effect on the lives of our communities and the health of our planet.

Making the connections between issues is vital. For example, although many well-being assessments made mention of the impacts of climate change as a serious concern, insight into the local significance of climate risk on particular communities, vulnerable groups, landscapes and infrastructure were lacking.

Only half of assessments made a direct link between housing, fuel poverty, health and decarbonisation.

To curb this crisis, we need to make the connections between key levers to improve well-being. For example:

- We need to push for fair and local procurement, implement a true circular economy and create spaces that work for our communities.
- In these challenging times, we need to do more to make sure seldom heard voices are given a platform to be involved in decision making.
- We need to embed longer-term planning and action into everything we do. Covid-19, the cost of living, the digital revolution, the impact of unpaid care and the climate crisis are all likely to exacerbate existing inequalities in Wales if we don't take steps to harness opportunities and limit harms.



**This is a call to make the brave decisions, to aim for net-zero and then some, to go further than is 'expected' or required of us. We don't have time to waste - we don't have 'later', this is our last moment to make sure there is a world for our future generations to thrive in.**

It is in these areas that we have identified slow movements for change, but this is also where public bodies need more support to reach our collective goals. We know the pressure public bodies are under, but we have to continue moving forward at a fast pace.

Moving forward we also have to challenge our learnt norms of how the world should run - this will be uncomfortable at times, but what is more uncomfortable are the predictions for the future of our planet.

These are my final months as the Commissioner, and I want to make sure that the Act is embedded in Wales.

We've had almost 7 years to get used to the Act and we have seen a huge shift in our behaviours and the way we make decisions.

Our challenge is to make the Act part of our DNA in Wales, a given that we are putting well-being first. To do this, we must bring our communities with us on the journey - as an integral part of the movement for change.

An important part of my role is to build this movement for change, and public bodies are important to building this momentum.

**I have talked a lot about 'frustrated champions' - those in organisations that are passionate about the Act but are stopped in their tracks by slow change and structures of old that are no longer fit for purpose.**

**But if we create a movement of frustrated champions, bringing more people on the journey of the Act, we won't have frustrated champions anymore, we'll just have champions doing great work for today and tomorrow.**

If you have any questions on our work with PSBs please get in touch at:  
[contactus@futuregenerations.wales](mailto:contactus@futuregenerations.wales)

## Movement for Change

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*This month my team spoke to Emma Robinson, YHA's (Youth Hostel Association) Development Manager for Wales about the history of the organisation, its current work and how they are harnessing long term preventative measures to improve the lives of young people — both now and for future generations.*

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“The YHA (England and Wales) is a 90-year-old social enterprise with some 150 hostels including 21 properties across Wales.

We’re a charity on a mission to enrich the lives of all, but especially young people, and improve physical health, mental well-being and life skills through the power of travel and adventure. YHA connects people to each other, to nature and the outdoors, to culture and heritage.

In early 2020 we published our 10-year strategy, [\*Adventure. For the first time and a lifetime.\*](#) Building on a decade of modernisation, its ambitions will see us reaching more people and growing our impact, with a focus on those who could benefit the most in an era that needs us more than ever.

Our 10-year strategy sees us return to the core values of our roots, to our beginnings. Born of economic disasters and demand for social reform, our founders determined to improve the lives and life-chances of young people. And in Britain, hostelling’s first green shoots sprang up in Wales.

Wales has its own unique history, heritage, language, landscapes, communities and government. For us to better support the people and communities of Wales, we need to recognise this in a way that we haven’t in the past.

We need a strategy for Wales which is tailored to Wales and its own specific strengths, challenges and priorities.

Most of our guests in Wales come from other countries and we're proud to play an important role in introducing the splendour of Wales to visitors, through sustainable tourism. But we want to do more for the people who live and work in Wales.

The Well-being of Future Generations Act and its goals have informed our emerging framework for a refreshed strategy for YHA in Wales.

Over this spring and summer, we want to talk to as many people, groups and organisations as possible to hear how we can make best use of our assets — our hostels, our people and our resources to improve opportunities for young people to access Wales' natural splendours and the adventures that await.

We want to make sure what we do complements and adds value to Wales' existing eco systems and infrastructures. The well-being goals and the architecture underneath them (ways of working and national well-being indicators) are a useful way to frame what we do in Wales to help present the work in a way that can easily be recognised.

It is helping to identify shared goals amongst existing and new partners — both public bodies and those working across the civil sector more widely — so we work better together on joint outcomes and activities that help deliver against the seven well-being goals.

YHA in Wales has huge potential to impact across the seven well-being goals. We are using the five ways of working as useful themes to support our own development in Wales; we want to integrate, collaborate and involve others so we can best support long term preventative measures to improve the lives of young people — both now and for future generations.

If you would like to hear more about YHA and our programme in Wales — or are interested to find out how YHA in Wales might be able to support your own activities towards the well-being goals, please email Emma at: [emma.robinson@yha.org.uk](mailto:emma.robinson@yha.org.uk)."

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We are YHA.

We transform young lives forever through travel and real adventure.

Because where you go changes who you become.

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For more information and to take part in the conversation please visit:

<https://www.yha.org.uk/about-yha/yha-in-wales>

## Meet the Team

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*Each month we will be publishing a Q&A with a member of my team who will share their insights into their time with my Office. This month it's Chief Operating Officer and Deputy Commissioner **Marie Brousseau-Navarro** who joined the team in 2016.*

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*When did you start with the office and what was the first piece of work you did in your new role?*

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I first joined the office in September 2016. I was the last of four directors to be appointed. I was really excited I remember, and a bit daunted as we had to start from scratch building the organisation as well as running it. My first big piece of work (in addition to helping set out our internal processes) was to set up the policy areas of focus for the Commissioner's term.

We knew a big risk for the office was to spread ourselves too fine and therefore not have the impact we wanted.

We used the five ways of working and involved around 2,000 people over 18 months to choose the 6 areas which would help us to have the biggest impact on environmental, economic, cultural and social well-being in Wales.

Our areas of focus which are well established now are like our own well-being objectives maximising our contribution to the achievement of the goals. I then became Chief Operating Officer and Deputy Commissioner in April 2021.

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*What changes have you noticed over the years?*

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I have seen an increasing understanding of the need for the legislation and of its usefulness and impact over the years. When we started, climate change and its risks were not as well established and recognised as they are now. The climate, biodiversity and COVID crisis have accelerated and deepened the buy-in in the legislation and the excellent initiatives from public bodies and beyond in Wales.

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*What has been your proudest moment?*

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There are many, I am so lucky to say. The [M4 decision](#); the publication of [Planning Policy Wales 10](#); addressing the New Zealand Prime Minister's Cabinet team and the OECD; and our auditors and ARAC members saying that my presentations on strategic risks made them excited to talk about risk, and lovely messages from colleagues telling me how much I help and support them. I feel so lucky, genuinely, every day to hold this position and to be able to try to change the world one piece at a time.



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*What has been your biggest piece of learning in your time with the office?*

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The power of positivity. I never suspected how much people (including public bodies) want to do the right thing and think like us. I have also understood more deeply how everything is connected. Well-being is one thing with many dimensions and facets, but it is one thing. A complex thing. I feel I am better equipped now to communicate this and to look for global, holistic solutions.

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*What is your foremost hope as the work of the office continues into the future?*

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I hope everyone will step up and really accelerate the change in all our practices as we only have 8 years left to turn things around on climate. We need this individually, nationally and internationally and fast. I hope we will all act in time.

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*What advice would you give to new team members?*

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Just to go for it. Believe in yourselves, immerse yourselves in our culture and environment. We will support you and coach you so that you can become another vibrant and flourishing agent for change. Our society needs you and we welcome you in our team.

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*One word that sums up your time at the Office of the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales:*

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An adventure.

We're recruiting!

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*We're looking for a Diversity, Inclusion and Anti-racism Partner.*

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This is an opportunity to use all your know-how to deliver results, influence change and build lasting relationships with others tackling inequality and discrimination including racism, ableism and intersectional discrimination.

Find out more about the role and how to apply [here](#).

Closing date: **Monday 10th June**



**WE ARE**  
**RECRUITING**

find out more on our website:

[futuregenerations.wales/careers](https://futuregenerations.wales/careers)

## Contact Us

Want to catch up on previous issues of the newsletter? You can find them on our website [here](#).

For more information get in contact here:

[futuregenerations.wales/](http://futuregenerations.wales/) / [futuregenerations2020.wales](http://futuregenerations2020.wales)

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