



Future Generations March 2023 Newsletter



Foreword

Shwmae, Derek Walker ydw I ac dwi'n Comisiynydd Cenedlaethau'r Dyfodol newydd.

Hi, I'm Derek Walker and I'm the new Future Generations Commissioner for Wales. As an office tasked with being the guardian of people in Wales who are not yet born, we're looking forward to continuing working with many of you to achieve the "urgent and transformational change" I called for on my first day.

You don't need us to tell you that people in Wales, like many countries all over the world, are suffering with the effects of problems that require a whole system change. We're all united in the commitment to a future where people in Wales are well, both mentally and physically, are involved in society, and in creating a liveable future for our unborn children, neighbours, and future leaders.

Our job is to support public bodies to make connected and long-term decisions as they provide the essential services from health and housing to transport, so that people in Wales live better lives.

It's an urgent challenge. This month, the IPCC declared a 'final warning' on the climate emergency. UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres said we need to "massively fast-track climate efforts by every country and every sector and on every timeframe." and that while the 1.5 degree limit is still achievable, we need a quantum leap and drastic action.

Yet, people are struggling with the impacts of the cost-of-living crisis – how do we get people to think about the future when they're worried about how they're going to pay this month's bills? We firmly believe that getting to net zero will help us with the cost-of-living crisis.

And in the [Well-being of Future Generations Act](#), we have a framework to ensure people's lives are improved as we get there.

The way our public services are delivered plays a huge part and is such an important part of the office's job. So my first priority is meeting people around Wales involved in that mission – to listen and understand how we can work together to ensure we make a difference.

We're calling this '[Our Future Focus](#)' - a chance for us all, everyone involved in leaving a better Wales for future generations, to maximise our impact. As a team at the OFGC, we're attending networks and meetings with organisations such as public bodies, community groups and others working on some of the sticky challenges we're facing, and we'll be sharing what we're finding.



<https://sway.office.com/9KMUO8MZ3SqxP39h#content=WW8skwXt8hucbZ>

We're committed to:

-
- *Listening to and working with public bodies and other organisations to work out how we tackle challenges and achieve change together.*
 - *Hearing about what measures can have the most impact on people's lives today and in 50-100 years from now.*
 - *Building on what's been achieved so far and maximising our impact, putting in a plan for how we can all work together to make this happen.*
 - *Focusing on joined-up solutions. The well-being goals are cross-cutting and Wales' challenges need solutions that allow us to improve well-being socially, culturally, economically and environmentally.*
-



I'm so energised by the stories I've heard and the incredible work I've seen. Here's just a taster of what my team and I have done this month, what we're hearing, and what's next...

- On day one, St David's Day, I met with directors from Amgueddfa Cymru/National Museum Wales and Clare Pillman, CEO of Natural Resources Wales. It was great to see Amgueddfa Cymru collaborating with FAW, the Football Association of Wales – an organisation we're supporting to become the world's most sustainable football association, and that Ameerah

Mai, a graduate of our Future Generations Leadership Academy, has been named as a trustee to the board of Amgueddfa Cymru.

- In my first fortnight, I took part in 'Climate Challenge Cymru', an online climate event to inspire school children in Mid and West Wales to take action on climate change, then gave my first speech at the community launch of Ynys Enlli's Dark Sky Sanctuary status. The island has been announced as the first Dark Sky Sanctuary in Europe, meaning its unspoiled view of the night sky is protected for current and future generations. At the event, run by Menter Mon, we learned that the further up we go in Wales, the more constellations you can see, and there is something special in imagining people living here in the Iron Age, looking up at the night sky and seeing exactly what we see now. That is what the well-being legislation is about – coming together in our communities and preserving our natural environment for the people thousands of years after we are gone.
- I met with the Chief Constables and Police and Crime Commissioners that make up the All Wales Policing Group, where we talked about collaboration, community partnerships and prevention and early intervention.
- Three of our office's team took the Eurostar to France for the launch of Welsh Government's 'Wales in France' year. They met with UNESCO, the OECD and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to promote Wales' well-being goals and to understand the work these organisations do on a local and regional level, to share with Welsh public bodies. We're hoping to continue these conversations with the potential to work together on areas like youth engagement, language and culture, joint workshops for our Future Generations Leadership Academy and more.
- We also attended a Senedd event on the 4-day Work Week, supporting findings from the UK's largest trial and calling for the Welsh public sector to initiate its own pilot. This followed our appearance at the Senedd Petitions Committee last summer with Autonomy, where we called for change to the traditional patterns of working, outlining the well-being benefits of a shorter working week.





- We also worked with the UK Government Climate Change Committee, who will publish information on Wales' progress on climate action, this summer and pressed the need to build on the good work happening in Wales by better joining up policy on things like sustainable transport, homes fit for the future and closing skills gaps in the green economy. Our research found that in construction of buildings like social housing and greening homes, for example, just 27% of the workforce is female and only 5% of people are of non-white ethnicity.
- I've spoken out on the need to protect Wales' river health – you can find out more, [here](#).
- Elsewhere this month, I've visited Government ministers, Public Services Board and local authority leaders, businesses doing their part to embody the well-being goals, and took part in my first panel event with Community Housing Cymru. We're also putting plans in place to strengthen our work with public bodies. Everything I have learned from these meetings will be invaluable as my team and we set Our Future Focus.

This is just the first month of seven years in my role, so my part in ensuring the Well-Being of Future Generations Act works hard for everyone in Wales is only just beginning.

Thanks to everyone who took part in the [office's first Twitter Space](#), at the end of my first week. More than 300 people listened in to hear my answers to some of the biggest questions facing Wales, and we hope to run more to hear more voices. We'll be sharing what we're hearing from conversations and events with people from across Wales.

In the meantime, you can email me at contactus@futuregenerations.wales and follow us @futuregenymru on Instagram and Twitter.

This month and next, we are gathering information that will help us in shaping Our Future Focus, and speaking with organisations who can help us reach the people we need to hear from. If you have

access to reports or information you think we should consider in our analysis, or you are organising events with groups you'd like us to speak with in the next few months, please get in touch via contactus@futuregenerations.wales.

In next month's newsletter we will share some of what we have learned so far, as well as further information on other ways to get involved – we're still shaping these methods based on the collaborative listening we're doing in this first stage.

For more information on the role of the Commissioner and the Well-being of Future Generations Act, go to our website: futuregenerations.wales

Our Future Focus

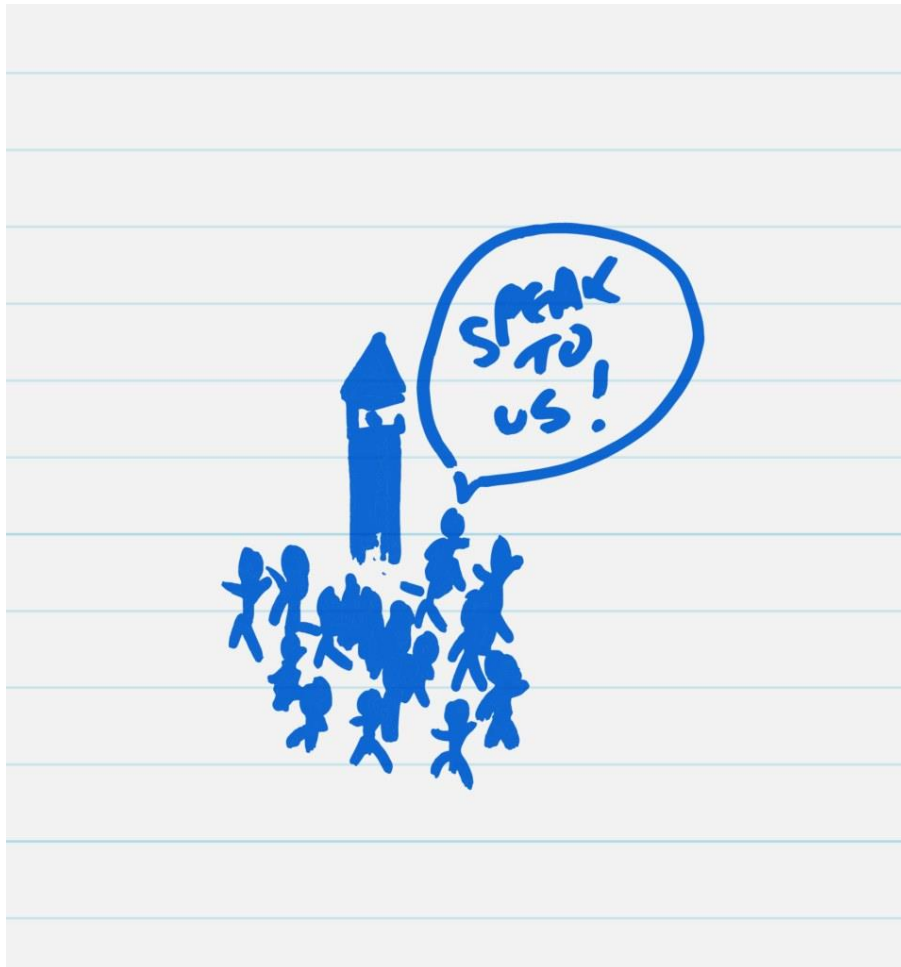
Over the next few months my team and I will be taking the opportunity to refresh our approach to what we do and set new areas of focus for our work.

Since I began on the March 1, my team have been in a period of reflection and review on the process of setting work priorities which happened seven years ago when the Office was first established.

Last time we set our areas of focus we used a range of involvement methods including desk research, panels of experts, consultations with stakeholders and the public via SenseMaker, and round table events. This helped us choose areas of focus identified as having the greatest potential to improve all four dimensions of well-being (environmental, cultural, social and economic).

These areas were:

- **Creating the right infrastructure for future generations, with a focus on:**
 - Planning
 - Transport
 - Housing stock
- **Equipping people for the future, with a focus on**
 - Skills for the future
 - Living well
 - Preventing and addressing Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)
- **Cross-cutting areas of corporate change:**
 - Decarbonisation
 - Strategic budget
 - Procurement



Since then, these areas have informed our work and helped form a basis for deciding what to get involved with. For example, we worked with Welsh Government to ensure the Act is reflected in their key planning guidance, Planning Policy Wales, and our work to influence the new Curriculum for Wales and ensure our children and grandchildren are well-equipped for the future.

You can find out more about our work [on our website](#), including [our reports](#) and the [impact of the Act](#) so far.

Much more is known now about the status of the seven well-being goals in Wales, how the Act is being implemented by public bodies and what the barriers to implementation are.

The office has undertaken a wide range of research and involvement, including the [Future Generations 2020 Report](#) and two [Section 20 Reviews](#) (procurement and Welsh Government's implementation of the Act). The movement behind the Act has also grown with many other organisations undertaking reviews and publishing thinking on the Act and its implementation. Welsh Government has published annual Well-being of Wales Reports and well as two Future Trends reports.

We will build on all of this knowledge, as well as the foundations we built the first time, to enable us to establish areas of focus within six months (the first time around, the process took 18 months in all).



While much has happened and changed over the last seven years, the major long-term trends affecting Wales (and the rest of the world) as identified in the previous priorities setting activity remain largely unchanged. These include the climate and nature emergencies, economic prosperity, the technological revolution, demographic change, social change and rapid urbanisation.

So what's next?

Over the next six months my team and I will be continuing [Our Future Focus work](#) - exploring what future generations need public bodies and others to do, and what our role as an office is in helping this to happen.

To help us do this we've outlined several 'Camau', ('Steps' in Welsh). These camau include:

Cam 1:

- Desk research, collating information from partners, and analysing information we already have (e.g conversations with public bodies and Public Services Boards, correspondence, Commissioner's events and more)
- Futures sessions with stakeholders to review our work so far and our proposed approach to next steps
- Forming a Steering Group to help inform this process

Cam 2

- Involving and collaborating with a variety of stakeholders and partners via meetings, events and existing networks
- Gathering feedback via an online survey to be launched towards the end of April

Cam 3

- Analysing what we've gathered through the above camau and using Futures methodology to help us determine our own role and strategic steps going forward

Cam 4

- Testing our analysis results and sharing outcomes

For more information on Our Future Focus, [visit our website](#).

In next month's newsletter we will share some of what we have learned so far, as well as further information on other ways to get involved – we're still shaping these methods based on conversations we're having in this first stage.



Not enough action is being taken to prevent damage to our rivers

Earlier this week [I published a release](#) on how the increase in some intensive farming practices is one of many serious and direct threats to our rivers in Wales.

The Well-being of Future Generations Act contains a national well-being goal of A Resilient Wales for its ecosystems and Wales has declared a nature emergency. We are concerned that [nearly one in five rivers](#) in Wales are polluted with sewage and are negatively affecting wildlife and people's health.

Our rivers are deteriorating at an alarming rate and a growing number of concerns have been raised with us from members of the public through our correspondence, requests for support and social media.

While I [do not have a case work function and cannot investigate or act upon individual concerns](#), including planning applications, my office does work to detect recurring and systemic issues. Planning applications related to the rapid increase of intensive poultry units are an example of an issue that's been raised with us, and one that is systemic in cause, being linked with the unsustainable relationship we have with our food.



In 2018, my office flagged the cumulative impact of intensive farming practises with both Welsh Government and Natural Resources Wales. Planning Policy Wales now states planning decisions made by local authorities must consider the affect that a development will have *‘on biodiversity and ecosystem resilience, including where there may be cumulative impacts on air or water quality which may have adverse consequences for biodiversity and ecosystem resilience.’*

Despite this, we’re concerned that not enough action is being taken to understand the cumulative impacts of intensive farming and prevent damage to our rivers – one of our most important natural resources – and that more needs to be done to ensure they are healthy for future generations.

If you are concerned about the state of a river’s ecosystem (ecology and/or water quality) we advise you to:

- Contact Planning Aid Wales if you’re concerned about a planning application as poultry units (and other types of development) can be challenged during the planning application process.
- [Planning Policy Wales](#) is a relevant consideration for Local Development Plans. Ceredigion Council have issued an update on theirs, regarding phosphate levels in River Teifi [here](#).
- While Local Development Plans are not an avenue through which people can stop or appeal a specific development, they are one of the ways through which the public can get involved and help shape local communities.
- Contact Natural Resources Wales and / or your local authority.
- Check your area’s well-being objectives published by in via your Public Services Board, in their local well-being plans. People can question how local well-being plans and objectives were considered in the decisions made by the local authority.

We also have tools to help people engage with and use the Well-being of Future Generations Act. For example, our [Future Generations Framework for projects](#) and [Future Generations Framework for scrutiny](#) can be used to ask how the long-term impacts of decisions are being considered and how decisions are considering the well-being goals, including ‘A Resilient Wales’.

In this role I intend to work with others including public bodies, to find out how we can achieve transformational change in Wales, including on the climate and nature emergencies that impact on how liveable a planet we have and leave to future generations. You can find out more about this in the Our Future Focus feature or on our website.

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 / futuregenerations2020.wales

contactus@futuregenerations.wales

@futuregencymru

