





What is the Well-being of Future Generations Act?

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The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act gives us the ambition, permission and legal obligation to improve Wales' social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being, to protect the interests of future generations and become a globally responsible nation.

The Act lays down Wales' commitment to the 17 <u>Sustainable</u> <u>Development Goals (SDGs)</u> set by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly in 2015 as a "blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all". Wales is the first country to implement these SDGs into law.

Unique to Wales, the Act localises these global UN targets into seven well-being goals and provides a legally-binding common purpose for national and local government, health boards and other specified public bodies. It details how these bodies must work together towards the same vision: improving the well-being of Wales, thinking about the long-term and collaborating with people, communities and each other.

The ultimate purpose of the Act is to create a globally responsible country that meets the well-being needs of both current and future generations.





































Why did Wales introduce the Act?

The world faces a number of challenges that impact us right now and will continue to for years and decades to come. These include the climate emergency, poverty and inequality, global pandemics, and the need to provide decent work and livelihoods for all, within the planet's limits.

We can only tackle these worldwide challenges and achieve the SDGs through global cooperation. Wales is committed to becoming a globally responsible nation through the Act, as the first country in the world to legislate for the SDGs.

At home, we require government and public bodies to become future focussed; to collaborate and involve their communities in strategies that prevent problems and provide long term solutions.

Beyond Wales, we hope to inspire other nations to do the same; to join us in promoting the interests of future generations and the sustainable development principles.

That's why we were delighted to see the UN's 2021 'Our Common Agenda' report recommend a UN Declaration for Future Generations, as well as a special envoy. It's an approach we've advocated for many years, and we'll continue advising the UN on implementation.



How does the Well-being of Future Generations Act work?

"Be inspired by this fascinating story of how Wales made into law the obligation for a country to pursue sustainable development on behalf of future generations".

 Gro Harlem Brundtland, former Prime Minister of Norway and former Director General of the World Health Organisation.

Set up for sustainable development

The UN SDGs set out an ambitious agenda to transform the world for people, planet and prosperity. We share this vision and are committed to making our contribution.

As we're responsible for implementing our own sustainable development policies in areas of devolved competence, we carried out a national conversation around 'The Wales We Want' to inform our national focuses for sustainable development.

Work like this helped shape our ground-breaking Act and its definition of sustainable development as:

The process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by acting, in accordance with the <u>sustainable development principle</u>, to achieve the well-being goals.

So what does this mean, in practice?

Driven by duty

The Act places a duty on Welsh Ministers, local authorities and public bodies to ensure policy and individual decisions are based on sustainable development and well-being. A duty that, by law, they must carry out.

How does the Well-being of Future Generations Act work?

Which public bodies does the Act include?

Welsh Ministers
22 Local Authorities
6 Local Health Boards
Public Health Wales NHS Trust
Velindre NHS Trust
3 National Park Authorities
3 Fire and Rescue Authorities

Natural Resources Wales
The Higher Education Funding Council for Wales
The Arts Council of Wales
Sports Council of Wales
National Library of Wales
National Museum of Wales

The well-being duty states:

Each listed public body must carry out sustainable development. The action a public body takes in carrying out sustainable development must include:

- a. Setting and publishing objectives that are designed to maximise its contribution to achieving each of the well-being goals
- b. Taking all reasonable steps (in exercising its functions) to meet those objectives

Therefore, each public body listed in the Act must work to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. They set and publish their own objectives – showing how they'll work to achieve Wales' vision, as laid out in the seven well-being goals – and take action to meet these objectives.

How does the Well-being of Future Generations Act work?

And it's the job of Wales' <u>Future</u> <u>Generations Commissioner (the world's only)</u> to make sure they do this – encouraging, advising and promoting change.

Philosopher and author of *The Good Ancestor*, Roman Krznaric, often champions this dedicated role as an example of "amazing long-term vision".

"In Wales, they've got a Future Generations Commissioner whose job it is to look at the impacts at least 30 years ahead - on employment, policy, environment and education."

Explore the steps we took to establish the Well-being of Future Generations Act in the appendix.

Well-being of Future Generations Act architecture

National
Well-being Goals
(Sustainable
development)

Understanding
Wales











Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language

Globally Responsible



National Indicators

Milestones



Future Trends



Making it Happen (Well-being duty)

Individual Duty Public Body Collective Duty
Public Services Boards

Community councils

5 Ways of Working (Sustainable Development Principle)











Enabling the Change (Accountability)

Future Generations Commissioner for Wales

Auditor General for Wales

Well-being Goals: The detail

The Act's seven well-being goals set out big ambitions to protect the environment, country, culture, communities and economy for future generations. Together they create a shared vision for relevant public bodies to work towards. And the Act makes it clear that public bodies must work towards *all* of the goals; not just one or two.

Prosperous

An innovative, productive and low carbon society which recognises the limits of the global environment and therefore uses resources efficiently and proportionately (including acting on climate change); and which develops a skilled and well-educated population in an economy which generates wealth and provides employment opportunities, allowing people to take advantage of the wealth generated through securing decent work.

Resilient

A nation which maintains and enhances a biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change (for example climate change).

LLESIANT CENEDLAETHAU'R DYFODOL WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

Healthier

A society in which people's physical and mental well-being is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood.

More Equal

A society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances (including their socio economic background and circumstances).

Globally Responsible

A nation which, when doing anything to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, takes account of whether doing such a thing may make a positive contribution to global well-being.

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.

Cohesive Communities

Attractive, viable, safe and well-connected communities.

Working towards The Wales We Want: National indicators and milestones

The Welsh Government uses 46 well-being indicators to measure progress against Wales' seven well-being goals. These help assess whether things are getting better for the country as a whole. Each of the indicators supports at least two of the goals, but many measure success for four or more. One ('international responsibilities') is tied to all seven goals.

Indicators include, for example, 'people living in poverty', 'sense of community' and 'air quality'.

An indicator:

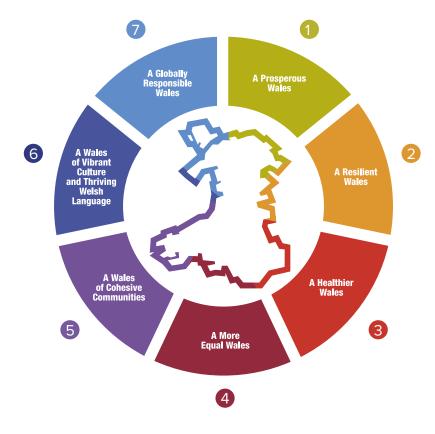
- Must be expressed as a value or characteristic that can be measured quantitatively or qualitatively against a particular outcome
- b. May be measured over such a period of time as the Welsh Ministers deem appropriate
- c. May be measurable in relation to Wales or any part of Wales

Ministers also set expectation milestones, highlighting what the indicators should show at certain points in the future. The Act enables Ministers to review and amend the national indicators and milestones, keeping them up to date and relevant.

At the start of each financial year Ministers publish an annual report, using these indicators to outline progress made.

Working towards The Wales We Want: National indicators and milestones





21 People in work	134
22 People not in education, employement and training	
23 People feeling involved	457
24 Satisfaction with access to facilities and services	345
25 Feeling safe	345

26	People satisfied 2656 with where they live	
27	Sense of community	4567
28	Volunteering	567
29	Mental well-being	34
30	Loneliness	345
31	Hazard free homes	2345

32 Reducing flood risk to homes and businesses		
33 Energy effciency of homes 1237		
34 Homelessness 1234567		
Participation in arts, culture and heritage		
36 People speaking Welsh every day		
37 People able to speak Welsh 567		
38 Participation in sporting 23567 activities		
39 Professional standards in heritage collections		
40 Looking after our cultural 260 heritage		
41 Greenhouse gas emissions		
42 Greenhouse gas emissions from global goods and services		
43 Healthy ecosystems 123567		
44 Biological diversity 02567		
45 Water quality 23567		
46 Social Value Partnerships		
For more information please visit https://gov. wales/well-being-wales-national-indicators		

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Future Trends Report

To stay on track, we need to understand the shifting nature of the challenges we face. And we tackle these by evolving with them.

Welsh Ministers publish a 'Future Trends Report' within the year following a Senedd election (held to elect members to the Welsh Parliament). This provides a clear and current picture of where we're heading.

The report covers:

- a. Predictions of likely future trends in the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, as well as some of the factors that may influence the direction of those trends
- b. Any related analytical data and information that the Welsh Ministers consider appropriate

Ministers also take account of the UN SDGs and the impact of climate change on Wales.

The Future Trends Report encourages public bodies, including Welsh Government, to consider these trends in combination with each other; identifying and discussing the potential opportunities and challenges they might present for us all.

Read the latest Future Trends Report here.

Sustainable development principle

The Act puts in place a 'sustainable development principle' that directs organisations to meet their duty under the Act.

Any reference to a public body doing something "in accordance with the sustainable development principle" means that the body must ensure the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations.

Public bodies must show how they've applied five ways of working, all of which help us improve efficiency, avoid repeating past mistakes and tackle long-term challenges:

Collaboration

Acting in collaboration with any other person (or different parts of the body itself) that could help the body to meet its well-being objectives.

Integration

Considering how the public body's wellbeing objectives may impact each of the well-being goals, their other objectives, or the objectives of other public bodies.

Involvement

Involving people with an interest in achieving the well-being goals and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area the body serves.

Long-term

Balancing short-term needs with the necessity to safeguard long-term needs.

Prevention

Acting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse may help public bodies meet their objectives.

Transparency

The Act puts in place key steps to help public bodies apply the sustainable development principle in their work and demonstrate progress towards achieving the well-being goals:

Well-being Statement

Public bodies publish a statement when setting their well-being objectives, explaining why each objective will help them achieve the goals and how they apply the sustainable development principle. They also involve people interested in achieving the goals, ensuring that they reflect the diversity of the area.

Annual Reporting

Public bodies publish an annual report showing the progress they've made towards their objectives.

Responding to the Future Generations Commissioner

Where the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales has made recommendations to a public body, they publish their response. If the public body fails to follow a recommendation, they'll detail why and set out alternative action.

Future generation guardians

the roles of the Future Generations Commissioner and the Auditor General help hold public bodies to account for their performance around the Act's requirements.

Future Generations Commissioner for Wales

Wales was the first country in the world to appoint a Future Generations Commissioner. This person acts as a guardian for the interests of future generations in Wales and supports the public bodies listed in the Act to achieve the well-being goals.

The Future Generations Commissioner for Wales:

Advises, encourages and promotes

The Commissioner can provide advice to public bodies and Public Services Boards, promoting and encouraging them to work towards their well-being objectives.

Researches

The Commissioner may carry out research into the well-being goals, the national indicators and milestones, as well as the sustainable development principle and how public bodies apply it.

Reviews

The Commissioner may review how public bodies are considering the long-term impact of their decisions and make recommendations based on the findings.

Recommends

The Commissioner can assist a public body by making recommendations around how well-being objectives are set and met. Public bodies must take all reasonable steps to follow the recommendations made by the Commissioner.

Publishes the Future Generations Report

A year before an Assembly election, the Commissioner must publish a report detailing improvements public bodies should make to achieve the well-being goals.

The Commissioner also engages with a range of international organisations and governments to share Wales' expertise and learn from how other countries implement sustainable development policies. And they've established the Future Generations Leadership Academy which provides training in sustainable development for young people in Wales, connecting with youth organisations globally.

Auditor General for Wales

The Auditor General for Wales has the power to examine the public bodies listed in the Act, looking into how they've acted in accordance with the sustainable development principle when:

- a. Setting well-being objectives
- b. Taking steps to meet those objectives

Wales in the world

The challenges faced by future generations aren't confined within Welsh borders, so neither is our vision for sustainable development.

The Welsh Government's <u>International Strategy</u> promotes sustainable development in worldwide engagements, supporting the A Globally Responsible Wales goal to be:

"A nation which, when doing anything to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, takes account of whether doing such a thing may make a positive contribution to global well-being."

We want to create positive change through our networks, alliances, global presence and partnerships, and help foster well-being and sustainable development for everyone on the planet.

Wales and Africa, for example, is an international programme funding projects that support learning, skill exchange, joint working and tackling climate change. It's seen people from Africa and Wales work together towards achieving the UN SDGs, as well as the Act's A Globally Responsible Wales goal.

The Welsh Government runs <u>21 international offices</u>, based within the world's major economies, that drive the International Strategy and help establish Wales as globally responsible.

Case studies: How the Act has made a difference

The Well-being of Future Generations Act has shaped big, world-leading policy shifts that contribute towards the well-being goals. And public bodies have risen to the challenge, finding new and collaborative ways to solve existing problems and drive transformation in Wales' economic, cultural, social and environmental well-being.

Here's how many are daring to deliver differently:

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Llwybr Newydd – the Wales Transport Strategy 2021 will shape Wales' transport system for the next 20 years. It sets out a new way of thinking that puts people and the climate at the heart of our transport system, prioritising active, sustainable travel.

02.

Wales is currently third in the world for household waste recycling and is committed to becoming a <u>zero-waste nation by 2050</u>, prioritising decarbonisation, resource efficiency and nature recovery. The Act sits at the heart of the government's Beyond Recycling strategy.

03.

Cardiff Council collaborated with the wider partners of Cardiff PSB, residents and businesses to develop a clean air and transportation strategy; helping the city meet a number of its well-being objectives, as well as the national well-being goals.

By seconding a public health consultant to the council, the PSB viewed its work through a public health lens, focussing on problems with congestion and poor air quality. This led to a focus on active travel through schemes like 'nextbike', introducing the congestion charge to the city, and new buildings like Ysgol Hamadryad – a primary school that's inaccessible via vehicle, encouraging more people to walk or cycle.

The plans also considered socio-economic links, prioritising cycle lane investment and active travel infrastructure for the most deprived areas, with the lowest life expectancy.

Case studies: How the Act has made a difference

Here's how many are daring to deliver differently:

04.

In South Wales, wildfires were significantly impacting habitats, watercourses and biodiversity, as well as the community's well-being. The region's Fire and Rescue Service and Natural Resources Wales demonstrated the power of integration by working collaboratively towards their 'reduce the number of deliberate fires' objective.

The 'Healthy Hillsides' project – in alliance with the Wildlife Trust, local authorities, voluntary sector partners, local farmers and the wider community – shows work towards a number of the Act's goals: A Prosperous Wales, A Resilient Wales, A Healthier Wales, A Wales of Cohesive Communities and A Globally Responsible Wales.

Together, they adopted preventative techniques – including bracken management, controlled burns and encouraging grazing animals – to save on fire-fighting resources and prevent further habitat loss.

05.

Culture is a powerful mechanism for maintaining good health and preventing illness, and many public bodies in Wales have found a way to integrate culture within their well-being objectives.

The National Library of Wales has collaborated with Hywel Dda Health Board on the 'Living Memory' scheme, which uses the Library's graphic and audio-visual collections to stimulate memories among older people and those living with dementia, contributing to mental well-being and supporting reminiscence therapy.

Free resources have been distributed to care homes and health organisations, local libraries and voluntary groups, contributing to happier and healthier communities throughout Wales.

Case studies: How the Act has made a difference

Here's how many are daring to deliver differently:

06.

The 'Lost in the Art' project uses visual arts to address issues that can affect people with dementia, including social isolation, lack of confidence, communication and quality of life, aiming to reduce and prevent them in the long term.

As part of the project, school pupils undertake 'Dementia Friends' training and work with participants to help strengthen intergenerational connection, contributing to the A Wales of Cohesive Communities goal.

Initially a collaboration between Denbighshire Council and Bangor University, the project has been rolled out to the neighbouring areas of Wrexham, Flintshire and Conwy, in partnership with Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, local GPs and the Alzheimer's Society.

Work with us

earning from other countries is crucial as we work towards our sustainable development goals. We couldn't achieve well-being for future generations without national and regional government, international organisation and UN agency partnerships. So please get in touch to explore how we can tackle global challenges together.

Welsh Government





Future Generations Commissioner for Wales

For information on how to work with the Future Generations Commissioner:

contactus@futuregenerations.wales

futuregenerations.wales

Appendix

Journey to establishing the Act

Over the last 20+ years, Wales has led activity to ensure sustainability begins not just at home, but in our global actions. Here are the key steps we took to establish the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

1998

It began with Wales' devolution...

White Paper, A Voice for Wales,

published in July, proposes the creation of a Welsh Assembly

1997

A referendum on devolution

sees 50.3% in favour and 49.7% against: a majority of just 6,721 that changes the course of Welsh history.

Wales' second Sustainable Development Scheme,

Starting to Live Differently, rounds up progress made since Learning to Live Differently (2000) and the Scheme's success. Then outlines a strategic framework and vision for future sustainable development work in Wales.

2004

UK Parliament passes the Government of Wales Act 1998,

providing the legal basis for the National Assembly for Wales. The Act requires publication of the 'Sustainable Development Scheme' to promote sustainable development, and annual reports on the scheme.

Wales' first Sustainable Development Scheme,

Learning to Live Differently, provides the over-arching framework for the Assembly's sustainable development work under the 1998 Act. It establishes a clear overview of long-term aims and highlights the need for sustainable development principles that span all areas of the Assembly's work, as well as other relevant Welsh public bodies.

2006

Government of Wales Act 2006 formally separates the National Assembly from the Welsh Government. The Welsh Government is set up as the devolved executive for Wales, responsible for making and implementing decisions, policies and subordinate legislation. This Act brings sustainable development to the heart of the Welsh Government's work – retaining the duty to promote sustainable development and including a power to promote or improve Wales' economic, social and environmental well-being.

2000

The Sustainable development and business decision making in the Welsh Assembly Government independent audit, reviewing Assembly Government decision making and sustainable development in the 10 years prior to *One Wales: One Planet*.

2009

Wales' third Sustainable Development Scheme, One Wales: One Planet, aims to make sustainable development the central organising principle of the Welsh Government. It sets out an up-to-date vision for a sustainable Wales, commits to a 'One Planet Nation' and recognises global environmental limits.

2010

Journey to establishing the Act

The Programme for Government commits to legislate sustainable development as the Government and public bodies' central organising principle. And to establish an independent sustainable development body for Wales.

Sustainable Development Bill White Paper – A Sustainable Wales; Better Choices for a Better Future, sets out proposals for a new sustainable development duty and an independent Commissioner.

2011

2012-2013

Effectiveness Review of the Sustainable Development Scheme – A Report to Welsh Government following the election, as a required by Government of Wales Act since 1998.

How do you measure a nation's progress? consultation

is held to gather views on proposals for the national indicators, which measure whether Wales is achieving the seven well-being goals within the Act.

National Conversation – The Wales We Want by 2050 – following the global conversation on #TheFutureWeWant, which shaped the SDGs, Wales initiates #TheWalesWeWant to inform the sustainable goals written into Welsh law.

2015-2016

2015

2014

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act is passed by the National Assembly for Wales in March and receives Royal Assent in April. The Act provides a comprehensive legislative approach to strengthen action on sustainable development, with a legal link to the UN SDGs.

Amendments to the Bill, establish a globally responsible Wales goal, set national milestones and the duty to take the UN's SDG actions into account when preparing a Future Trends Report.

Wales appoints the world's-first statutory independent Future Generations Commissioner to act as a guardian of future generations.

Well-being of Future Generations Bill is introduced into the National Assembly, strengthening existing governance to improve the well-being of Wales.

2016

2017 - 2019

National Well-being Measurement Framework is laid before the National Assembly for Wales, setting out 46 measures of progress against the seven well-being goals.

Well-being of Wales: 2017, 2018 and 2019 – Reports present national progress made against the seven well-being goals, referencing the 46 national indicators.

Wales and the Sustainable Development Goals – supplementary report to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland Voluntary National Review of progress towards the SDGs 2030.

Measuring our nation's progress consultation is held to gather views on the proposals for new national milestones.

2021

2020

Senedd Cymru (Welsh Parliament) Public Accounts Committee investigates Well-being of Future Generations Act implementation barriers. The Senedd debates the *Delivery for Future Generations – the story so far* report when published.

The Auditor General for Wales' report follows examination of the sustainable development principle.

The Future Generations Report 2020 by the Future Generations Commissioner assesses how public bodies could improve their well-being objectives and provides practical advice and guidance.

Key achievements

Wales is committed to creating a sustainable future, and alongside The Well-being of Future Generations Act, we've driven ambitious action over the past decade to tackle global challenges.

Here are some of the key milestones:

2010

 Climate Change Strategy for decarbonisation and adaptation

2011

 UNFCCC Momentum for Change Lighthouse project winner for the Mbale Tree Planting Programme

2013

 Active Travel (Wales) Act – sets Wales on a path towards an 'active travel nation'

2014

 Founding signatory to the Compact of States and Regions

2015

- Size of Wales project safeguards a two-million hectare area of forest in Africa
- Founding signatory to the Global Climate Leadership Memorandum, Under 2 MOU
- Nature Based Climate Action MOU commits to the importance of ecosystem approach

2016

- Environment Act shows how the UN priorities can be implemented at a state and regional level, including climate change targets, biodiversity duty and the sustainable management of natural resources
- Wales becomes party to the Paris Agreement
- Wales becomes a founding contributor to The Climate Groups Future Fund, empowering developing and emerging economy regions to accelerate climate action

2018

- Wales joins the international Powering Past Coal Alliance, focussing on the transition away from unabated coal power generation
- Future Generations Commissioner for Wales becomes Chair of the Network of Institutions for Future Generations

Key achievements

2019

- Prosperity for All: A Low Carbon Wales sets out 100 policies and proposals on how we're taking action to reduce our emissions
- Wales is the first parliament in the world to declare a Climate Emergency
- 10 millionth tree planted in Uganda by the Size of Wales Mbale
 Tree Programme
- Prosperity for All: A Climate Conscious Wales sets out how we are adapting to the impacts of climate change

2020

- Wales joins the Well-being Economy Government Network (alongside Scotland, New Zealand and Iceland)
- Wales is a key partner in the Edinburgh Process for Subnational and Local Governments on the development of the Post 2020 global biodiversity framework
- Wales publishes its International Strategy with Global Responsibility as one of three targets
- Wales commits to plant 25 million trees in Uganda by 2025

2021

- Llwybr Newydd: The Wales Transport Strategy 2021 is published, prioritising active travel and committing to reduce emissions
- A new 'super-Ministry' is established, bringing transport, planning, housing and energy, together with the environment, into a single Ministry to join up policy and deliver lasting change
- The UN Our Common Agenda report recommends a UN Declaration for Future Generations, as well as the appointment of a UN Special Envoy for Future Generations – part of the approach Wales has been advocating for the past 5 years

Glossary

Senedd Cymru – The Welsh Parliament (often just "the Senedd")

Senedd election – Senedd elections are held to elect members to Senedd Cymru – the Welsh Parliament

Public body – An organisation that delivers a public service, without being a government department. Known as 'government agencies' in the USA

Public Services Board (PSB) – A committee that improves joint working across all public services in each of Wales' local authority areas

Further reading

International Strategy for Wales

Future Generations Report 2020

Wales and the Sustainable Development Goals

