



Future Generations Newsletter

February 2024



Foreword



1 - Derek Walker, Future Generations Commissioner for Wales

The Well-being of Future Generations Act is unique in the ambition it sets for Wales and is inspiring others across the globe, but despite increasing good practice, it is not being implemented at the pace and scale needed.

The mission at the heart of my new seven-year strategy Cymru Can, is to ensure the implementation of this legislation fully lives up to its potential, and to close the gap between aspiration and delivery. I have re-focused my team to do more to support and challenge the 48 (soon to be 56) public bodies that come under the Act.

Public Services Boards (PSBs) are a crucial part of the jigsaw and are a space for long-term thinking and collective problem solving on the issues facing communities.

On 22 February, working with Welsh Government, we brought together all 13 PSBs for an annual event in Wrexham. While Ryan Reynolds didn't make an appearance, we did hear from some other stellar speakers that shared their drive and determination to improve communities including:





- **Noreen Blanulet**, Co-founder of the Co-production Network for Wales, and **Nokhuthula Nyoni-Smith** alumna of our Future Generations Leadership Academy 2022, who both co-chaired the event.
- **Rebecca Evans MS**, Minister for Finance and Local Government
- **Cllr Neil Prior**, Chair of Pembrokeshire PSB discussed the '[Together for Change](#)', a partnership in Pembrokeshire that aims to support community led action and put the voice of communities at the centre of decision making. The partnership is working to better understand the needs of communities and find practical ways to support them. Their 10 Point Plan prioritises:
 - Building trust and understanding based on a common vision and holistic model of well-being that combines social, economic, environment and cultural aims;
 - Generating and using existing evidence on what works;
 - Getting on with the work by supporting communities with better funding models and shared learning.
- **Nina Ruddle** from Wrexham PSB and Wrexham Glyndwr University brought to the table a focus on learning and development, running leadership master classes and creating space outside of meetings for ideas to be developed and delivered, like the University for Children.

- **Sarah Norman**, CEO of Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council who were this year's winner of the prestigious Local Council of the Year Award for their work over almost three decades to regenerate Barnsley.
 - Hearing from an example outside of Wales like Barnsley was illuminating – as an ex-coal mining area, many of their challenges were like what we've faced in Wales. Stable and authentic leadership putting education, skills and culture at the heart of their regeneration strategy means that Barnsley is now seen as a *“place of possibility”*.

It was a pleasure to meet the 80 people+ that attended from local authorities, health boards, the voluntary sector, and national bodies. A common theme throughout the event was the incredible power that there is in communities and how to enable this through genuine involvement and collaboration.



Workshops were held on common challenges that PSBs are prioritising including net zero, nature recovery and community well-being, and the 'Commissioner drop-in sessions' that we offered proved popular.

The impact of the work that PSBs - and indeed my team - are involved with, often doesn't produce immediate results. PSBs don't have any money and must operate within a complicated partnership landscape of [Regional Partnership Boards](#) and now [Corporate Joint Committees](#) – we have advocated to Welsh Government to simplify this. What was common by the speakers and everyone at the event was an enthusiasm for the role of Public Services Boards and a determination that these will live up to their potential.

Government must play its part in making this happen, PSB members, and my office too.



The event also marked the launch of the [Ways of Working Progress Checker](#), a useful resource to help public bodies use the five ways of working. Like previous guidance we've published, this is based on the premise of simple changes that people can take first, moving to more advanced actions.

My team has been trialling and testing this resource over the past six months and have now made it available online.

We intend to run workshops to promote its use across Wales and support public bodies to involve, work preventatively, integrate, collaborate and think-long-term.

For more information on our work with public bodies and PSBs, and the Ways of Working Progress Checker please [visit our website](#).

"I was surprised how simple and straightforward [the Ways of Working Progress Checker] was and I'm so glad I put time aside to go through it."

There were only a few statements under each Way of Working which was great and I was able to complete in no time. I needed to consider some statements more than others but the report at the end is very useful.

I'm looking forward to us as an organisation to proceed with it. I can see that reflecting and understanding where we are will make a difference in moving forward effectively."

Ann Jones, Public Health Wales

Collective action and integration

There are several organisations and professional networks that support public bodies and PSBs to implement the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

For example, the Welsh Local Government Association, Audit Wales' Good Practice Exchange, the NHS Confederation, Co-Production Network Wales, Welsh Government, Wales Council for Voluntary Action as well as academia and other voluntary sector organisations.

We helped to set up the 'Supporting Organisations Network' (S.O.N.) to co-ordinate our collective efforts and reduce duplication in how we help organisations apply the legislation.

At our last meeting in early February, we heard from members on what they had planned for 2024 including:

- North Wales Research and Insight Partnership are running their [Children's University project](#) which aims to inspire a love of learning among children and young people in North Wales by promoting access to extra-curricular activities.
- [Infuse](#), an innovation and research programme in the Cardiff Capital Region, are updating their programme building the skills and capacity of civil servants in innovation.
- Led by members from Natural Resources Wales and Public Health Wales, organisations are working to map well-being objectives across the national indicators.

Supporting public bodies to take a longer-term view

In our new strategy [Cymru Can](#), we've made it a priority to ensure public services and others in Wales are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to consider the future in everything they do.

We've just published our [Ways of Working Checker](#) and a few months ago, we also held a number of learning and development sessions in Bangor, Gwynedd and Barry, South Wales to build capacity within public bodies to take a longer-term perspective.

More than 20 organisations from across sectors attended to learn more about the Well-being of Future Generations Act's long-term way of working and how they can use it in practice.

The training also included application of three different foresight and futures methods including:

- The Three Horizons – a model which looks at how ‘dominant’ a way of working is and how that might change over time. You can read more in our [Three Horizons Toolkit](#).
- Backcasting – a method focused on working backwards from a preferred future to the present and creating a plan of action.
- A STEEP analysis of future trends –how different long-term trends under each category (Social, Technological, Environmental, Economic, and Political) can have an impact on our organisation or region in the future.

Following the training, public bodies shared how they will take their new learning forward by applying a longer-term perspective and using futures tools to help with decisions. They also were keen to introduce the resources to organisations that they work with, but who do not fall under the Act.



“Really enjoyed the workshop last week... I would appreciate further opportunities to test out the tools, particularly three horizons... I can see the value in backcasting... In my area of interest in health and social care, we think about transformation at lots of different levels, and there were tools which can add value in many settings.”

“Thank you so much for last week’s long-term thinking event. I found it so interesting and incredibly useful, especially learning how the three horizons method works in practice.”

Following these sessions, we have provided further advice and assistance to the Vale of Glamorgan Council and Swansea Bay University Health Board to embed long-term thinking in their work, including a workshop with the Vale’s Senior Leadership Team on their Corporate Plan (2025-30) and advising the Health Board on the [Population Health Strategy: A better future for all](#).

We plan to become a hub of knowledge for the public sector in Wales which provides research and information on future trends and scenarios. We will also be building on our external training offer and offer more opportunities for public services to exchange knowledge and inspiration for the future.

If you’d be interested in long-term and futures training, please email contactus@futuregenerations.wales.

Responding to requests we will soon be publishing a futures and long-term toolkit in collaboration with Public Health Wales, focused on reducing health inequalities. Keep an eye out on our website and social media for more information.



If you are interested in futures methodologies and considering the long-term you may find these resources useful:

- Our [Horizon Scanning](#) and [Three Horizons](#) resources
- [Case studies](#) we have produced on how the Act is being implemented including thinking long-term and the other ways of working
- Welsh Government's [Future Trends Report](#)

Resilience through health care - Our Health Meadow

Earlier this month, I visited 'Our Health Meadow' at University Hospital Llandough where they are delivering outdoor-based healthcare and rehabilitation as well as building and protecting space for nature to thrive. It's a great example of how the dual aims of improving our health and our natural environment can be integrated, for the benefit of both.

Over the last few years, the Meadow, situated on a working hospital site, has transformed into a haven for patients, staff and the wider community, with dedicated seating areas and exploration trails, allowing users to find respite and solace in the green landscape.

Led by Cardiff & Vale Health Charity on behalf of Cardiff and Vale University Health Board, the site has been created and maintained by patients and staff through a healthcare-centred approach with support from Down to Earth Project.

I was shown around the site by Mike Jones, an Independent Board Member and Chair of the Our Health Meadow Committee Group, whose enthusiasm for the project was uplifting.

We visited the round houses, created using traditional methods by service users who also left their mark through plaques on the underside of the roof; the growing community orchard and "edible landscape"; and the Old Oak Tree, which dominates the landscape and has been marked by a fence laid by patients and volunteers.

Both patients and volunteers have benefitted from their time on site with many people's confidence improving and many finding an increase in mobility and a decrease in tiredness.

Mike and I discussed the ambitious plans for the project where current site users will pass over the site management, and aspirations, to future users. This embodies the intentions of the Well-being of Future Generations Act, which emphasises the importance of collaboration, integration, and long-term thinking to improve the well-being of people alive now and those to come.





"The project is a breakthrough in providing an inclusive environment for people of all ages and abilities.

I have known many of the participants for years, throughout their treatment and have witnessed such a change in their self-belief, confidence and general well-being.

I have to say that I have also noticed a positive change in my own well-being and how I am able to cope with the pressures within my services - so thank you."

Senior Occupational Therapist, University Hospital Llandough, Community Neuro Rehabilitation Service

The success of projects like Our Health Meadow relies on a collective commitment to prioritising innovation in healthcare delivery. Health is central to our well-being, and we need long-term and collaborative approaches that keep people healthier. We are advocating moving from a 'clinical' to a 'social model' of health that recognises the wider socio-economic, cultural, and environmental root causes of illness and the role that nature and strong communities play.

The community involvement in the Meadow ensures that it reflects the needs and values of the local population, strengthening social ties and fostering a sense of collective responsibility for well-being.

The site is open and accessible as a thoroughfare for the public and relies on public donations to continue and develop.



Find out more about the Meadow via [Our Orchard](#) and the [Cardiff & Vale Health Charity](#) websites.

You can also find more information on the project and how it aligns with the WFGA in our case study, [Cardiff & Vale enhancing biodiversity](#).

If you are a company or individual interested in how you can get involved or donate to the work of Our Health Meadow for the benefit of patients, please get in touch with Cardiff & Vale Health Charity (fundraising.cav@wales.nhs.uk) or donate here (<https://healthcharity.wales/donate/>).

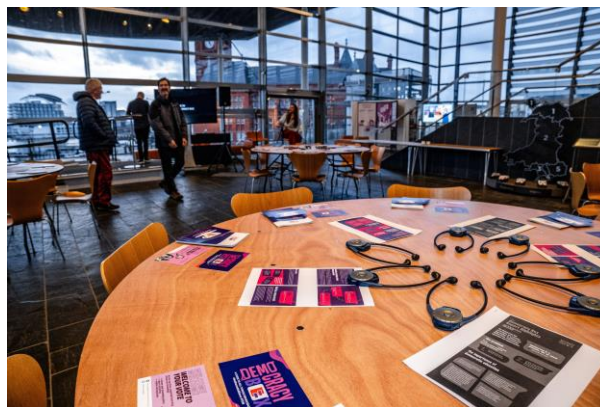
Beyond the Ballot Box report - The Democracy Box

On the 7th of February, the Democracy Box co-creators and Yvonne Murphy, lead partner of Omidaze Productions, publicly launched their new report, Beyond the Ballot Box, in Senedd Cymru. Here's what they had to say about it...

The Democracy Box young co-creators arrived in Senedd Cymru this month to publicly launch and celebrate the publication of [The Democracy Box Report – Beyond the Ballot Box](#).

To date, 67 young people aged 16 to 26 from across Wales have been recruited and trained as Democracy Box young co-creators, including from the 5 lowest voter turn-out constituencies. Hundreds more have contributed via creative think-ins, interviews, surveys, live events and prototype testing.

Feedback from nearly 9,000 visits from people of all ages to The Talking Shop trials across Wales has also shaped this research which has led to the Beyond the Ballot Box report and its 10 recommendations.





Creativity, creative approaches, and co-creation are key to increasing both cultural and democratic participation. Creativity and the creative arts help us to express ourselves, make sense of the world and fine-tune our critical thinking, debating, collaboration and consensus-reaching skills, along with encouraging us to challenge and critique.

One of the report's key findings, the **Knowledge Gap**, discusses how a lack of joined up and accessible information around our democracy is leading to record levels of disillusionment, distrust, disengagement, and dissatisfaction with our UK democracy.

Our research has also evidenced that we need democratic education year-round, not just around election and voting times, via:

1. Democratic education in schools
2. Public democratic information campaigns outside of elections
3. In-person democratic information spaces

We have created prototype solutions for all three options which are ready to be scaled up including a public information campaign, a Creative Cascade programme for schools, The Talking Shop and a Democracy Box toolkit. Find more information on these in the [report](#).

For more information on The Democracy Box and their new report, visit their [website](#).

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"As a young person, stuck in my house, I didn't feel heard, seen or cared about by those in charge. I was also frustrated that many of my friends felt so disengaged from the democratic landscape, that they felt we had no control over any decisions that had a huge impact on us.

The main thing I want everyone to know from this report is that democracy is for everyone and should be accessible to everyone... Democratic education is our right."

Saskia Pay, original 2020 cohort of young co-creators

Refresher sessions: Well-being of Future Generations Act

Are you...

- Trying to be more sustainable and looking for a way to up your game on making a difference for current and future generations?
- Wanting to create practical change but it feels harder than it should?
- Applying the Well-being of Future Generations but looking for a quick refresher to keep you on track?

Over the next six months, Welsh Government and Academi Wales are jointly running hour-long 'top-up' sessions on the Act, with support from our team and Audit Wales Good Practice Exchange.

Suitable for beginners and experience practitioners, the top-up course provides one hour of experiential learning and will bring you up to date with some of the latest behavioural science you can apply, in practical and effective ways, to deepen your understanding and application of the Act.

The next course dates are:

- Monday 11th March at 2pm (Welsh)
- Friday 19th April at 10am (Bilingual)
- Thursday 6th June at 9.30am (Welsh)
- Tuesday 25th June at 9.30am (Bilingual)

Please e-mail sustainable.futures@gov.wales to register your attendance.



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:

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