



Health in All Policies

Legislating for sustainable development and embedding a Health in All Policies approach in Wales

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Introduction

Wales, with a population of just over 3 million (Figure 1), is one of the four nations that make up the United Kingdom (UK).

The Welsh Government has 'devolved responsibility' with law making powers for certain policy areas: health, education, economic development, transport, agriculture, housing, planning and the environment. Other responsibilities, such as defence, welfare, and criminal justice, remain 'reserved powers' within the scope of the UK Government.

Sustainable development at the heart of devolution

In 1998, Wales became one of the first nations in the world to have a legal requirement in relation to sustainable development. Since devolution,

Wales has developed successive schemes to promote sustainable development at a national and local level (Figure 2).

In 2011, the Welsh Government became increasingly aware of the need to tackle and respond to the changing demands of globalisation, climate change and new technologies. There was recognition that traditional models and levels of service would not be possible in future, along with a need to empower and develop a new relationship with communities. More specifically, public health challenges such as an increase in chronic diseases, an ageing population, health inequalities, and damaging health behaviours such as smoking and obesity required a more sustainable solution with the complex pattern of health determinants being addressed. In recognition of these trends, the Welsh Government pledged to make sustainable

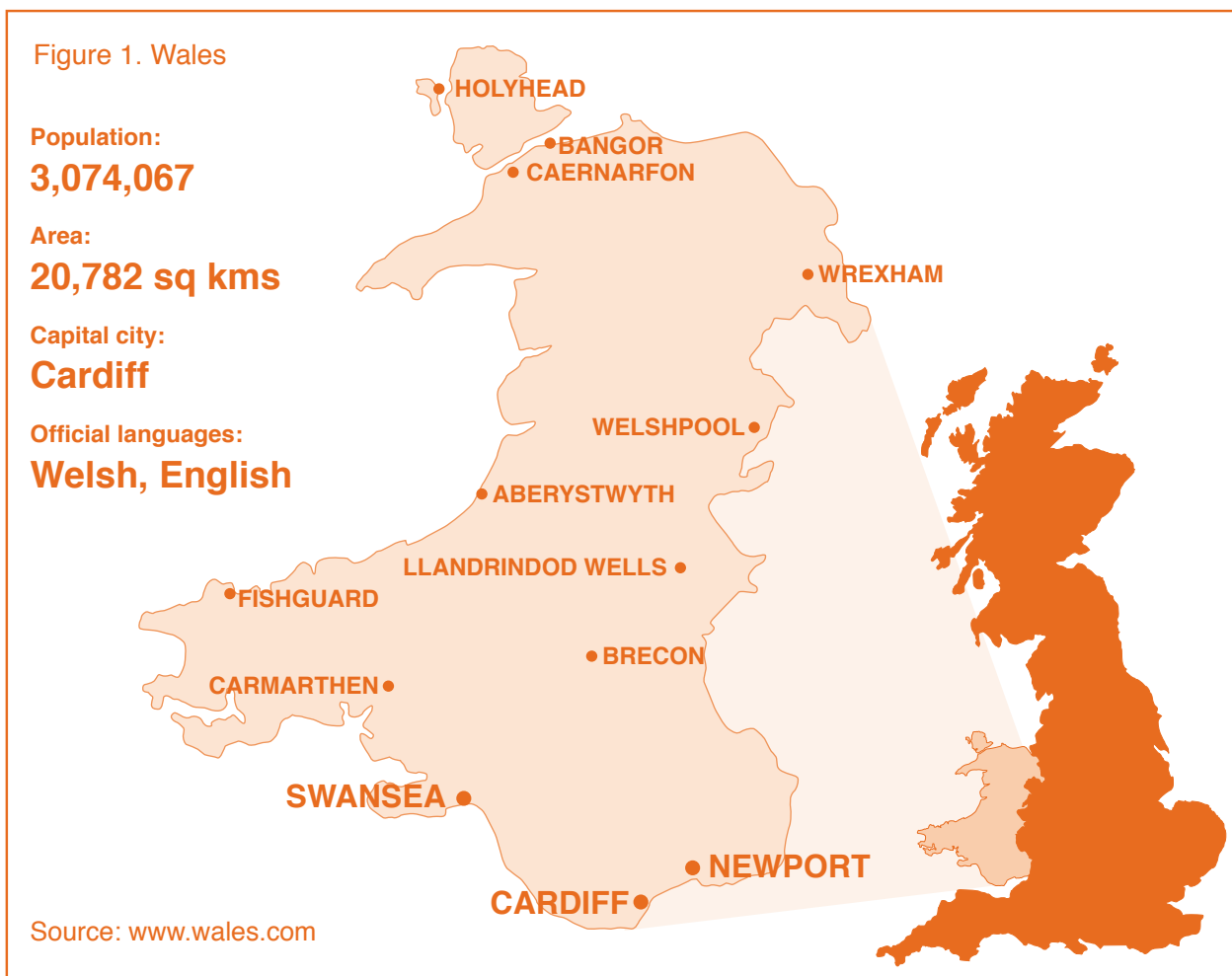
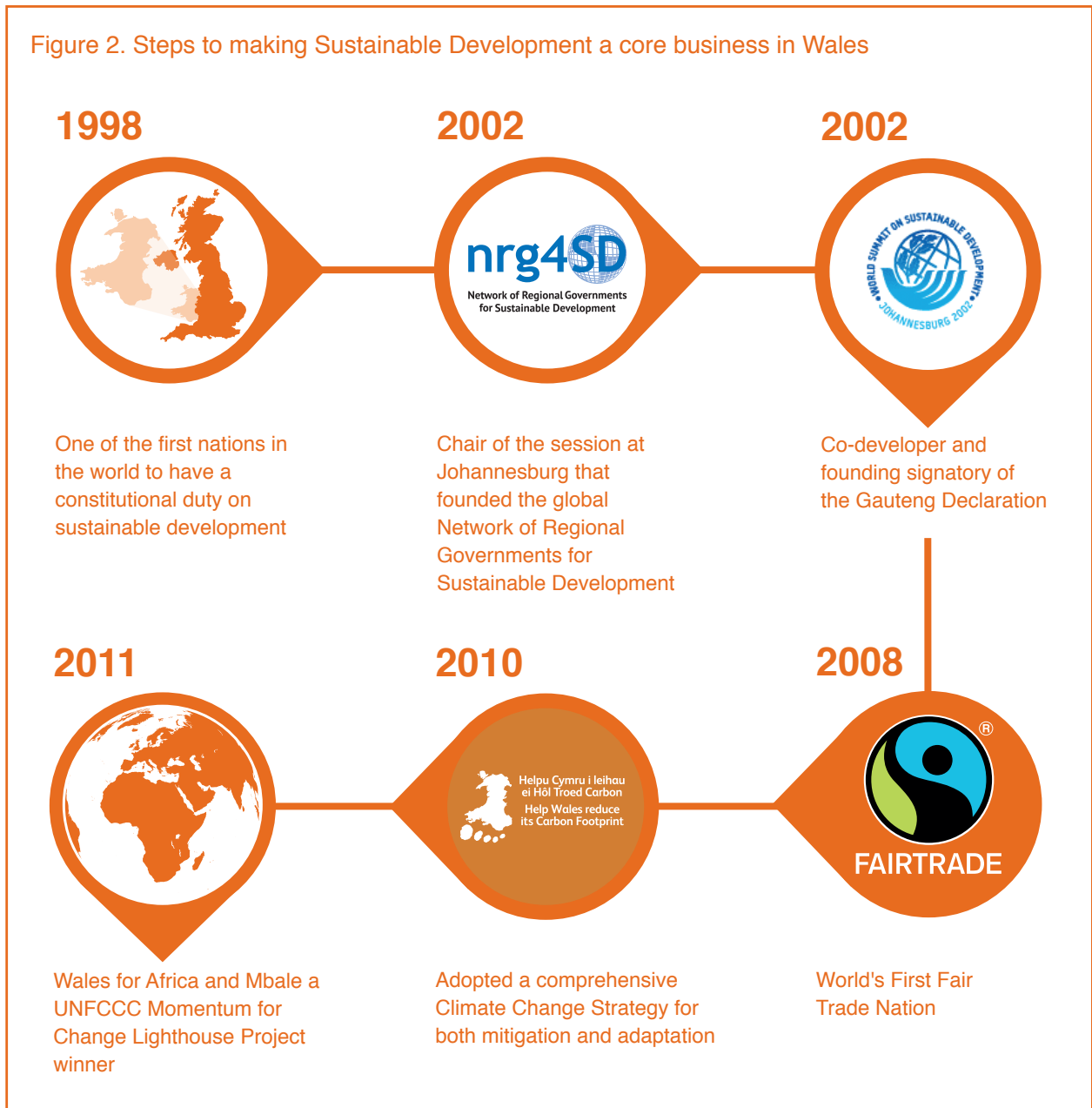


Figure 2. Steps to making Sustainable Development a core business in Wales



development the ‘central organising principle of the public service’. This recognised health and well-being as being important prerequisites for the achievement of economic growth, reducing poverty, supporting social capital and improving labour productivity and coincided with the Minister for Environment and Sustainable Development attending the United Nations Rio+20 Conference, and launch of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) development process.¹ With Ministerial support, Wales dedicated policy and legal resources

towards developing legislative proposals in parallel to this emerging international agenda, including mirroring the United Nations conversation on ‘The World We Want’² with the Welsh public – ‘The Wales We Want’ (Box 1).

The ‘Wales We Want National Conversation’ involved over 7,000 people and all major stakeholders. The results fed into the consultation and legislative scrutiny process where stakeholders had an opportunity to influence policy changes such as the addition of

Box 1. A national conversation about the future



“No society has the money to buy, at market prices, what it takes to raise children, make a neighbourhood safe, care for the elderly, make democracy work or address systemic injustices. The only way the world is going to address social problems is by enlisting the very people who are now classified as ‘clients’ and ‘consumers’ and converting them into coworkers, partners and rebuilders of the core economy.”

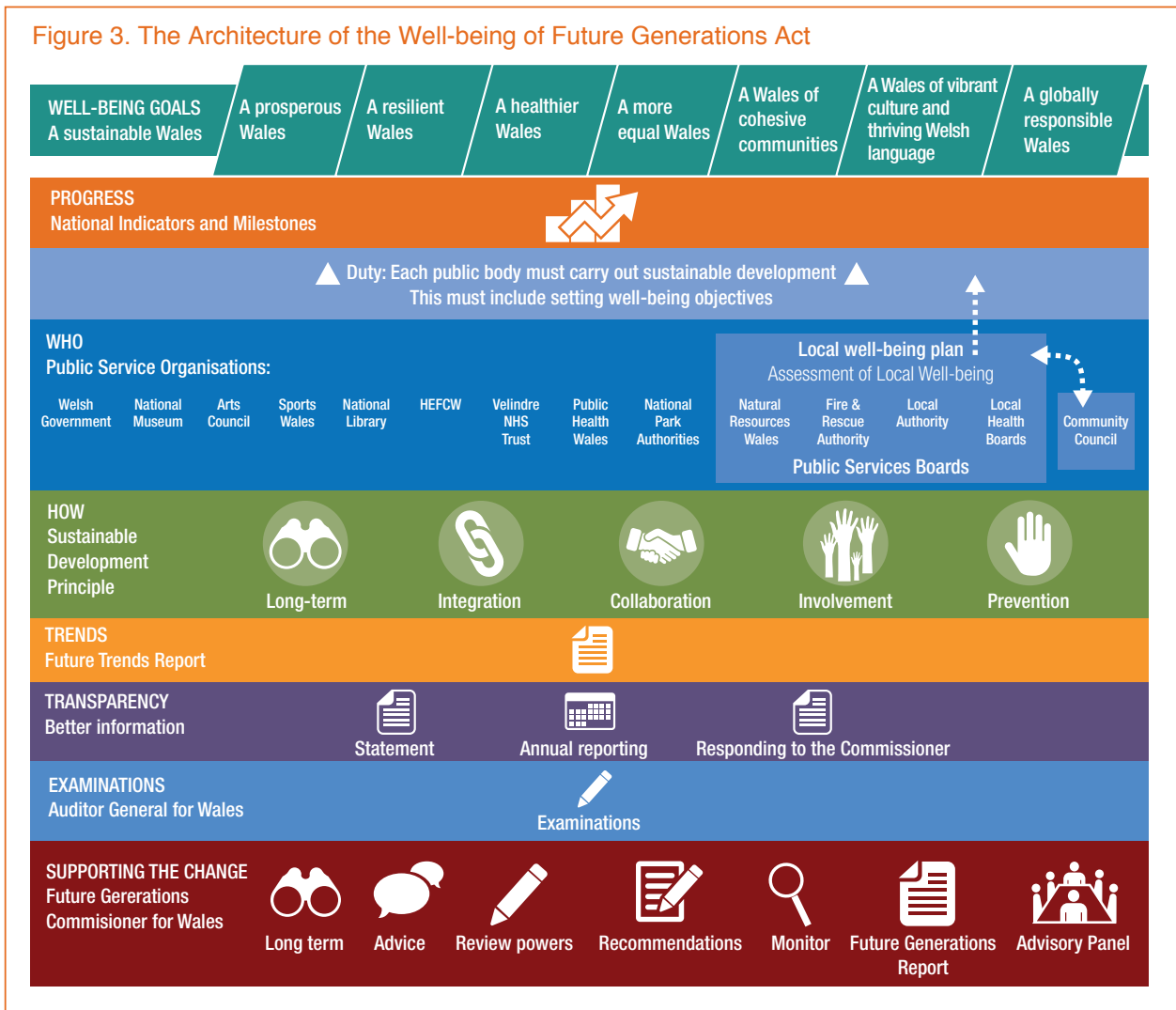
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a fourth ‘cultural’ pillar, alongside the economic, social and environmental pillars of well-being, and a name change from the ‘Sustainable Development Bill’ to ‘The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act’.³ In publishing the Act and related guidance in 2015⁴, Wales set out the step change required for public services to tackle the most complex health and societal problems and to mobilise civil society to serve and sustain future generations. It was envisaged that the legislation would provide organisations with a mandate for collective action, and consistency in how sustainable development would be embedded, whilst refraining from being prescriptive to allow for local discretion. Wales also became one of the first nations in the world to establish a legislative link to the international SDGs.

Vision for the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

Legislation is arguably one of the most powerful tools available to Government to direct long-term policy goals, influence change and enable action for the benefit of whole populations. Factors attributed to the successful development and now, enactment of The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 include: clear aims which all sectors can understand and sign up to; an attempt to strengthen governance for the long term; to provide greater transparency in how decisions are made across the public service; to create the potential for sharing evidence and learning from best practice; and to encourage a culture and understanding of collective responsibility and better alignment of action towards a common set of outcomes.

Figure 3. The Architecture of the Well-being of Future Generations Act



Mechanisms and Processes

The Act provides an enabling framework to support public bodies to work differently, as summarised in Figure 3.

From April 2016, all public bodies in Wales are working towards a legally binding common purpose, set out in Section 4 of the Act as seven statutory well-being goals (Figure 4).

As well as working to achieve the well-being goals, public bodies must use the sustainable development principle (Figure 5) to shape what they do, how they do it and how it is communicated. These new ways of working are familiar to those whose role it is to advocate for population health.

Figure 4. Seven Well-being Goals for Wales

Goal	Description of the goal
A prosperous Wales	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.
A resilient Wales	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).
A healthier Wales	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.
A more equal Wales	A society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances (including their socio economic background and circumstances).
A Wales of cohesive communities	Attractive, viable, safe and well-connected communities.
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.
A globally responsible Wales	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.

Figure 5. Applying the Sustainable Development Principle: the 'five ways of working'

Long term
 The importance of balancing short-term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to also meet long-term needs.

Prevention
 How acting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse may help public bodies meet their objectives.

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

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.

Involvement
 The importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the well-being goals, and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area which the body serves.

Box 2. Membership of Public Services Boards

Public Services Boards must include:

- The local authority
- The Local Health Board
- The Welsh Fire and Rescue Authority
- The Natural Resources body for Wales

In addition, each PSB must also invite Welsh ministers, the chief constable, the police and crime commissioner, probation services and a voluntary sector representative body.

Establishing partnerships

Public bodies are required to set and work towards well-being objectives that maximise their contribution to achieving the well-being goals. The main statutory partners (Box 2) are required to work together, through newly established Public Services Boards (PSBs), to collectively assess and publish a report on well-being in their local area (a well-being assessment), which will inform the development of their local well-being plan.

Accountability

Monitoring and accountability structures are built into the legislation. An independent Future Generations Commissioner has been appointed to act as a guardian of the ability of future generations to meet their needs and to encourage public bodies to take greater account of the long-term impact of their actions. She has a role to monitor, advocate, challenge and review and public bodies must take all reasonable steps to follow her recommendations. The Commissioner is currently considering the best approach to prioritising her work.⁵

The Auditor General for Wales will seek evidence from public bodies, including the Welsh Government, to demonstrate how they have implemented the sustainable development principle (Figure 5) and is currently trialling innovative audit methods to do this.

Tracking Progress

Recognising the need to track progress in achieving the seven well-being goals, the Act puts in place a requirement to establish national indicators and milestones. In March 2016 the first statutory set of National Milestones were laid before the National Assembly for Wales, following public engagement. These cover a range of outcome measures to help tell the story of whether Wales is becoming more sustainable. These are population indicators, intended to measure progress in improving the long-term economic, social, cultural and environmental well-being of Wales.⁶

In September 2017 the first statutory Well-being of Wales report was published outlining progress against the seven well-being goals for Wales by reference to the 46 National Indicators for Wales. This work included mapping of the indicators to the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

A Future Trends Report looks at the likely future well-being trends of Wales, in order to influence planning and priorities at a national and local level.⁷

Work is also starting on developing a set of national milestones for Wales as required by the Act.

Implementing the Act

Wales is now at the initial stages of implementing the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

Three short examples give an illustration of the 'change' at a national, local and organisational-level.

1. Welsh Government

The Welsh Government is subject to specific duties under the Act - these cover duties that provide key building blocks for the implementation of the Act such as establishing guidance, national indicators, national milestones and future trends information, as well as the well-being duty it has as a public body.

In September 2016 the 'Taking Wales Forward' report was published, setting out Government's program to drive improvement in the Welsh economy and public services, delivering a Wales which is prosperous and secure, healthy and active, ambitious and learning, united and connected. In the context of the Act the program for government recognised the challenge of integration and the need to join-up better. The First Minister for Wales, Carwyn Jones said:

"The issues we face can only be tackled through new ways of working, including joined up programmes which reinforce and build on what people and communities are doing for themselves. Taking Wales Forward sets out how we will work across traditional boundaries to deliver our priorities. Four cross-cutting strategies will help us to maximise our impact in these uncertain times and deliver the promise of the Future Generations Act."

In November 2016, the Welsh Government published its initial well-being objectives designed to contribute to the seven well-being goals, and committed to review and revise them as part of a different approach to joining up across Government; including the establishment of policy working groups focusing on themes and issues that span traditional departmental or ministerial portfolios. It also made a commitment to the development of a strategy on Healthy

and Active, Prosperous and Secure, United and Connected, Ambitious and Learning, to guide all of Government's activity and support prioritisation; with an agreement to apply a Future Generations 'lens' to budget setting, business planning and policy development.

The Act provides a strategic framework for Government's Health in All Policies approach. Health Impact Assessments (HIAs) already take place across Wales and are considered an important way of ensuring health is considered across a range of activity. While a broad range of organisations have used HIAs, their use can be inconsistent and could be strengthened. Complementary to the Well-Being of Future Generations Act, The Public Health (Wales) Act⁸, places a duty upon Welsh ministers to make regulations about the circumstances and ways in which public bodies must carry out a HIA. Using the same definition (comprising both physical and mental health), provisions in the Public Health (Wales) Act aim to realise the benefits of HIAs more widely, make a significant contribution to improving the health and well-being of the nation and its communities, and position Wales as a world leader in the application of public health policy and legislation.

2 Public Services Boards and local assessments of well-being – the challenge from the Future Generations Commissioner

The Act establishes Public Services Boards (PSBs) as mechanisms for collaboration between key public bodies and other partners at the local level (Box 2). The Future Generations Commissioner has provided robust and detailed feedback on draft Well-being Assessments, so that they provide a strong evidence base for public bodies to collaborate.

The Commissioner has published a report of the key themes, challenges, opportunities and learning from the Well-being Assessments. The report is called 'Well-being in Wales: planning today for a better tomorrow'.⁵ It contains a number of recommendations for the public service in Wales focusing on key elements of the

Well-being of Future Generations Act, including:

- Ensuring that the ways Public Services Boards operate, best support the ethos of the legislation, facilitating the challenging of 'business as usual' and enabling new approaches and perspectives to be developed.
- Undertaking further work to provide a deeper understanding of people's lived experiences to understand how people experience and engage with services and what they want and need for the future.
- Building capacity, expertise and confidence to understand forecasting, future trends and the needs of future generations, including considering scenarios and trends which are less certain.
- 'Digging deeper into data' to better understand the causes and effects of key issues and trends, in relation to both community and individual well-being.
- Using evidence to identify and explore tensions between different policy issues and priorities, to enable an honest discussion about new approaches that need to be taken.
- Taking a more integrated approach to interpreting data across economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being, in order to better understand how different issues interconnect and what this means for well-being in particular localities.
- Developing mechanisms to gather and use qualitative place-based data and insights, particularly from the third and private sectors, and fully recognise the value it adds.

3 Public Health Wales – an organisational response

Public Health Wales, a public body with a national remit to protect and improve health and well-being and reduce health inequalities, recognises the unique opportunity presented by the Act. For the organisation, the Act reflects its commitment to Health in All Policies and finding sustainable solutions to some of Wales' complex and stubborn problems such as intergenerational poverty and health inequalities.

Public Health Wales, along with the Welsh Government and other public bodies, was required to publish its first well-being objectives and statement a year after the Act received assent. The well-being objectives were developed through applying a future generations 'lens' to identify areas that exemplified the sustainable development principle and where the organisation could maximise its contribution towards the well-being goals. Public Health Wales was mindful of the need to apply the 'five ways of working' (Figure 5) such as identifying objectives that support positive outcomes in the *long term*, *involving staff* from across the organisation, incorporating the views of stakeholders and identifying objectives that enable *preventative* action. The organisation will continue to collaborate with partners to develop a shared approach to achieving well-being objectives, building on and enhancing existing relationships and identifying areas for further integrated working.

The Act has already enabled the organisation to work differently, for example providing the framework for discussions both with the criminal justice sector and housing sector, leading to the agreement of Memoranda of Understanding and joint programs of work that focus on prevention and early intervention in a range of areas, including Early Years. Public Health Wales has published reports such as *Making a Difference: Investing in Sustainable Health and Well-being for the People of Wales*⁹ and a series linking Adverse Childhood Experiences (traumatic experiences that occur before the age of 18) and health-harming and anti-social behaviours¹⁰; mental well-being¹¹; and chronic diseases and health service use.¹² These resources can be used by public bodies and PSBs to identify evidence-based actions to help inform their response to the Act.

A baseline assessment of Public Health Wales' starting position in relation to the Act has been carried out, with the aim of understanding of the corporate, cultural and collaborative 'readiness' of the organisation. A key challenge identified through this process, as well as through staff engagement, has been the importance of

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making the Act “real” for staff and enabling them to put the new ways of working into practice.

The well-being goal for ‘a prosperous Wales’ requires the transition to a low carbon society. Public Health Wales is playing its part in this vision, as a public body and employer, by implementing an environmental sustainability strategy to take forward actions to reduce the organisation’s carbon footprint. Early work has included relocating around 500 staff from several smaller offices into one collaborative, social and learning-focused workplace, and delivering a ‘marketplace’ to provide staff with support and advice on their individual sustainability. Public Health Wales has received early recognition of their leadership in this area through the 2017 ‘NHS Sustainability Awards’ which benchmark and reward action on creating a more sustainable National Health Service across the UK.

Embedding a Health in All Policies approach – challenges and opportunities

The ‘Health in All Policies approach’, as defined in the Helsinki Statement 2013¹³, is embedded through the aspiration and the architecture of the legislation.

The Act provides a definition of health (physical and mental well-being) and places ‘health’ on par with other societal goals. ‘Health’ and ‘equality’ are both recognised as integral parts and prerequisites for sustainable development, as is echoed in the Shanghai Declaration¹⁴, which positions health and healthy living as central to delivering on the Development Agenda 2030 and its SDGs.

The Act helps to articulate an understanding of the determinants of health, with good health not only a result of access to quality health care, but being based on socio-economic status, early intervention, prevention, enabling physical environments as well as individual genetics and behavioural choices, thus moving towards a position where health and equality are everybody’s business.

The Act helps to facilitate a ‘win win’ strategy, creating a shared language and common purpose for intersectoral working at a national, regional and local level. It calls for an integrated approach to policy and service planning, thereby providing an opportunity to identify how and where ‘health’ supports other agendas and vice versa. The ‘ways of working’ (Figure 5) and the national indicators serve to underpin how a wide range of public services need to think and behave differently and act collectively to address complex, multi-faceted problems that require a joined-up response, involving key partners and local communities. The new accountability mechanisms place an emphasis on informed decision making that will lead to a positive contribution to the longer term outcomes of economic, cultural, environmental and social well-being of Wales.

Supporting implementation, the role of the Health & Sustainability Hub

The test of the legislation and its impact on ‘business as usual’ will need to be demonstrated and shared as quickly as possible in order to support and sustain the behavioural and cultural change that is intended.

The Health and Sustainability Hub has a unique role to drive this agenda and to support Public Health Wales, the NHS and the wider public service in:

- **Raising awareness of the legislation**
By developing tailored, creative communications which will target different audiences whether from corporate functions, health services or in the executive team.
- **Engaging on an individual level**
By producing a practical guide for staff to ‘be the change’; demonstrating how they can contribute to sustainability on a personal level in their workplace.

Table 1. Timeline for Well Being of Future Generations Act

2015	
Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Bill National Assembly for Wales agreed the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Bill.	17 March 2015
Royal Assent	29 April 2015
United Nations Sustainable Development Goals The 17 SDGs were adopted by the United Nations General Assembly.	25 September 2015
2016	
Future Generations Commissioner for Wales Future Generations Commissioner duties and functions commenced.	1 February 2016
Statutory guidance Publication of statutory guidance <i>Shared Purpose: Shared Future</i> .	24 February 2016
National Indicators Publication of first National Indicators to measure progress against the seven well-being goals.	16 March 2016
Well-being duties Well-being duties on public bodies and public services boards commenced.	1 April 2016
Public services boards established	1 April 2016
Role of Auditor General for Wales Auditor General's examination power and duty commenced.	1 April 2016
Public Services Boards First meeting of each public services board to occur no later than 60 days after the date on which the board is established.	By 31 May 2016
Well-being objectives (Welsh Ministers) Welsh Ministers' first well-being objectives must be set and published no later than 6 months after the National Assembly for Wales election.	By 5 November 2016
2017	
Well-being objectives (other public bodies) Public bodies' (other than the Welsh Ministers) first well-being objectives must be set and published no later than the beginning of the financial year following the commencement of section 9 of the Act, which was on 1 April 2016. Each public body is required to report on progress it has made in meeting its well-being objectives for the preceding financial year. Further detail on this can be found in the section on 'Annual Reporting' below.	By 1 April 2017
Future Trends Report The Welsh Ministers must publish the first report containing predictions of likely future trends on the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, and any related analytical data and information the Welsh Ministers consider appropriate.	By 5 May 2017
Public services boards – Assessment of local well-being Each public services board must prepare and publish their first assessment of local well-being. An assessment of local well-being must be published no later than a year before the publication of the local well-being plan.	By May 2017
2018	
Local well-being plans Each public services board must prepare and publish their first local well-being plan. A local well-being plan must be published no later than one year after the date of each ordinary election to the local authority.	By May 2018
Local well-being plans: role of community councils Those community and town councils to which section 40 of the Act applies must take all reasonable steps towards meeting the local objectives in the local well-being plan that has effect in their area.	From the date the first local well-being plan that has effect in their area is published
2020	
Future Generations Report First Future Generations Report must be prepared and published by the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales.	By May 2020
Auditor General for Wales Report First Auditor General's report to the National Assembly on examinations.	By May 2020

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- **Supporting Live Labs**

By drawing on the best evidence-based approaches to embedding the Sustainable Development principles. Utilising learning from Quality Improvement methods, organisational development and public service reform, the Hub will draw together these findings and develop an implementation framework or route map including key actions and enablers which will support and sustain system-wide sustainable development.

- **Building capacity for systems-change**

By facilitating and supporting a network of public health professionals across Wales who are involved in the work of Public Services Boards (PSBs), including advocating and defining the leadership qualities needed to improve sustainable health and well-being.

Reflection

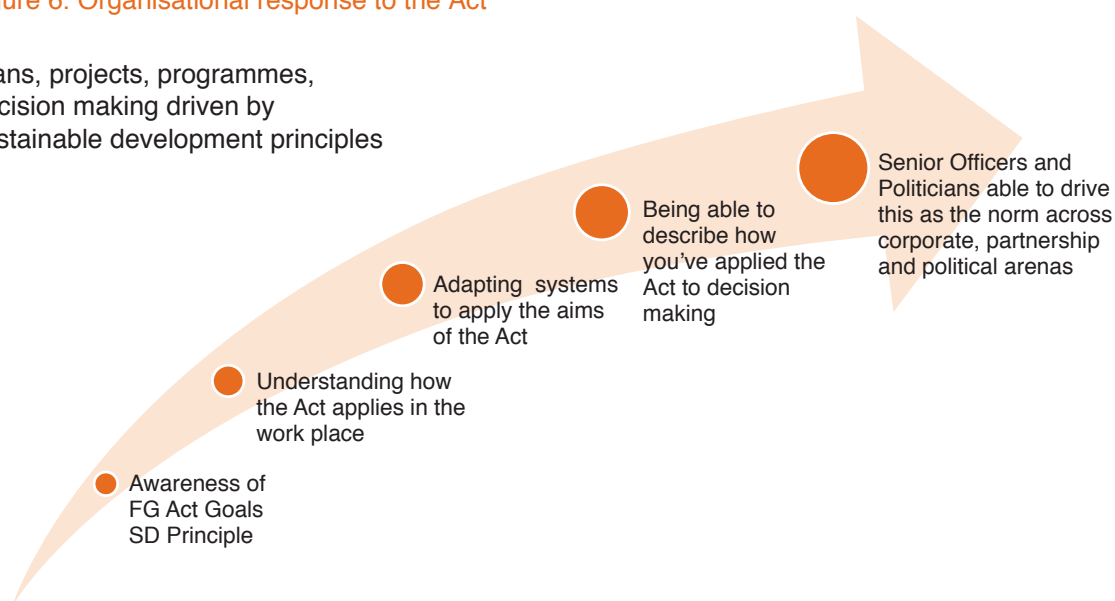
Wales has been consistent in attempts to integrate health considerations into policy-making and has articulated this in key strategic documents since 1990. Wales also has a strong track record in working to address social inequity with established skills and expertise in key sectors such as civil service, academia and public service. Despite this

intent, health inequalities still remain a challenge and are evident with real differences in health outcomes between those who are least and most deprived.¹⁵ At a local level, the feedback from the Future Generations Commissioner on the Well-being Assessments gives local health boards a new opportunity to reframe the focus and understanding of the determinants of health and to highlight how various partners can make upstream contributions throughout the life course.

The level of organisational and cultural change required is clearly an iterative process as indicated in the Welsh Government example, and the experiences from Public Health Wales. It will dictate the work of the Health and Sustainability Hub and necessitate creative and dynamic ways to engage and communicate how the Act will impact on staff and systems on a day-to-day basis. This task is not to be underestimated. Going forward, the emphasis will be placed on articulating the 'difference required' at all levels; for individuals, teams and organisations across the whole of public service, in order to move towards sustainable development being 'the central organising principle', as illustrated in the 'spectrum of response' in Figure 6.

Figure 6. Organisational response to the Act

Plans, projects, programmes, decision making driven by sustainable development principles



Source: Netherwood Sustainable Futures: Sustainable Development and Climate Change Consultancy.

Conclusion

This landmark piece of legislation enshrines Wales' long-standing commitment to sustainable development and seeks to build on and strengthen efforts at a national and local level to tackle complex intergenerational challenges. It sets ambitious and long-term goals based on sustainability principles and is linked to the United Nations SDGs. The participative process that was utilised to develop the legislation and was instrumental in achieving 'buy in' from non government actors, stakeholders and the public alike is now reinforced at the implementation stage, which demands a truly participatory approach to the development of national and regional policy and services in Wales.

Alongside other legislation in Wales, such as the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014¹⁶, which is driving a change in the care system towards a more preventative approach, the Well-being of Future Generations Act provides an enabling framework so that we can think and work differently. For example, the new ways of working can be seen in a program of work to prevent Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), which has Welsh Government Ministerial support. This has culminated in Cymru Well Wales, a collaborative partnership between different sectors, securing funding to set up a multi-agency *Adverse Childhood Experience Prevention and Support Hub* to address the prevention of Adverse Childhood Experience.

A devolution settlement with more powers for Wales and long standing commitment from the First Minister have been important enablers in this journey; helping to position Wales as a potential global model of how the UN Sustainable Development Goals can be translated into action at a 'sub-national' level and contributing to a Wales that we all want to live in, now and in the future.

“What Wales is doing today the world will do tomorrow”

Nikil Seth, Director of Sustainable Development, United Nations, April 2015¹⁷

Key contact/s and further information

Public Health Wales

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