Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

The Essentials

Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

www.gov.wales

Advise, Encourage & Promote

Advisory Panel

Annual Report

Auditor General for Wales

Carry out Reviews

Collaboration

Future Generations Commissioner for Wales

Future Generations Report

Future Trends Report

Integration

Involvement

Long Term

Make Recommendations

National indicators & Milestones

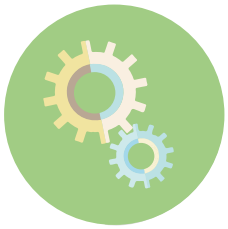
Prevention

Public Services Boards

Research

Responding to the Future Generations Commissioner

Sustainable Development


Sustainable Development Principle

Transparency

Well-being Duty

Well-being Goals

Well-being Statement

Contents

What is the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act? 3

Why do we need this law? 4

Which public bodies does the well-being duty in the Act apply to? 4

How does it work? 5

Sustainable Development Definition 5

Well-being Duty 5

Well-being Goals 6

Sustainable Development Principle 7

Transparency 8

Auditor General for Wales 8

Future Generations Commissioner for Wales 9

National Indicators and Milestones 10

Future Trends Report 10

Public Services Boards 11

Find out more 12

2nd Edition May 2015

This document is prepared by the Department for Natural Resources of the Welsh Government to assist the reader of the Act and does not form part of the Act nor is statutory guidance in respect of the Act.

This document is issued by the Welsh Government as a helpful communication tool and readers should obtain their own legal advice in respect of the Act and the provisions therein.

Well being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

What is it?

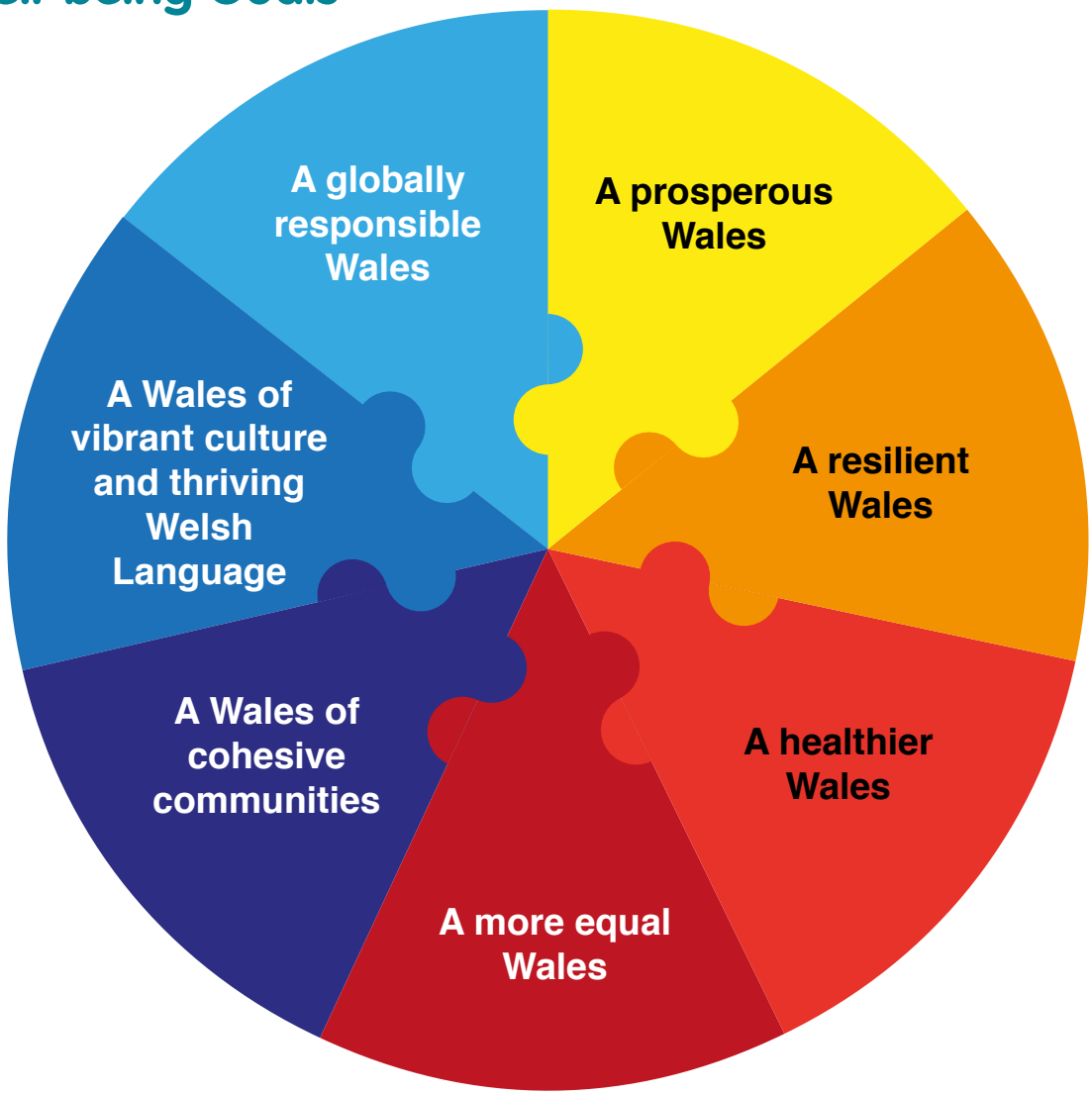
The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales.

It will make the public bodies listed in the Act think more about the long-term, work better with people and communities and each other, look to prevent problems and take a more joined-up approach.

This will help us to create a Wales that we all want to live in, now and in the future.

To make sure we are all working towards the same vision, the Act puts in place seven well-being goals.

Well-being Goals



Why do we need this law?

Wales faces a number of challenges now and in the future, such as climate change, poverty, health inequalities and jobs and growth. To tackle these we need to work together. To give current and future generations a good quality of life we need to think about the long term impact of the decisions we make. This law will make sure that our public sector does this.

Which public bodies does the Act include?

- Welsh Ministers.
- Local Authorities.
- Local Health Boards.
- Public Health Wales NHS Trust.
- Velindre NHS Trust.
- National Park Authorities.
- 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.

How does it work?

Sustainable Development

Sustainable development is about improving the way that we can achieve our economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being. The Act starts by giving a definition of what we mean by sustainable development.

In this Act "sustainable development" means the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the well-being goals.

Part 2 'improving well-being' section 2 'sustainable development'.

For Wales to be sustainable it is important that we improve all four aspects of our well-being. Each is as important as the others.

Well-being Duty

The Act places a duty that the public bodies will be expected to carry out. A duty means they have to do this by law. The well-being duty states:

Each 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 ("well-being objectives") that are designed to maximise its contribution to achieving each of the well-being goals, and

b. taking all reasonable steps (in exercising its functions) to meet those objectives.

Part 2 ' Improving Well-being section 3 'well-being duty on public bodies' paragraphs (1) and (2).

This means that each public body listed in the Act must work to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. To do this they must set and publish well-being objectives.

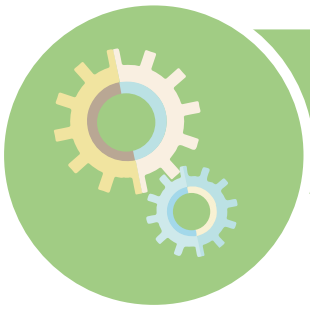
These objectives will show how each public body will work to achieve the vision for Wales set out in the well-being goals. Public bodies must then take action to make sure they meet the objectives they set.

Well-being Goals

The seven well-being goals ('the goals') show the kind of Wales we want to see. Together they provide a shared vision for the public bodies listed in the Act to work towards.

They are a set of goals; the Act makes it clear the listed public bodies must work to achieve all of the goals, not just one or two.

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.



Sustainable Development Principle

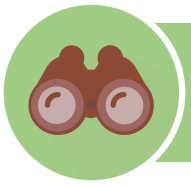
The Act puts in place a 'sustainable development principle' which tells organisations how to go about meeting their duty under the Act.

In this Act, any reference to a public body doing something "in accordance with the sustainable development principle" means that the body must act in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Part 2 'Improved well-being, section 5 'the sustainable development principle, paragraph (1)'.

Public bodies need to make sure that when making their decisions they take into account the impact they could have on people living their lives in Wales in the future.

There are 5 things that public bodies need to think about to show that they have applied the sustainable development principle. Following these ways of working will help us work together better, avoid repeating past mistakes and tackle some of the long-term challenges we are facing.



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.

Transparency

It is important that public bodies apply the sustainable development principle in their work, and that they can show people that they are making progress towards achieving the well-being goals. The Act puts in place a number of steps to make sure that the public bodies listed in the Act are doing this:

Well-being Statement

Public bodies must publish a statement when setting their well-being objectives explaining why they feel the objective will help them achieve the goals and how it has applied the sustainable development principle.
They must also make sure that they involve people interested in achieving the goals and that those people reflect the diversity of their area.

Annual Reporting

Each year public bodies must publish an annual report showing the progress they have made in meeting their objectives.

Responding to the Future Generations Commissioner

Where the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales has made recommendations to a public body, they must publish their response. If the public body does not follow a recommendation they must say why, and what alternative action they will take.

Auditor General for Wales

The Auditor General for Wales may carry out examinations of the public bodies listed in the Act to assess:

> **…the extent to which a body has acted in accordance with the sustainable development principle when;**
>
> **a. Setting well-being objectives, and**
>
> **b. Taking steps to meet those objectives**
>
> *Part2 'Improved well-being' section 15 'the sustainable development principle: Auditor General's Examinations paragraph (1).*

The roles of the Auditor General and the Future Generations Commissioner will help to ensure that the public bodies are held to account for their performance in relation to the Act's requirements.

Future Generations Commissioner for Wales

The Future Generations Commissioner for Wales' role is to act as a guardian for the interests of future generations in Wales, and to support the public bodies listed in the Act to work towards achieving the well-being goals.

The Future Generations Commissioner for Wales has a range of actions they can carry out:

Advise, encourage and promote

The Commissioner can provide advice to public bodies and Public Services Boards and promote and encourage them to work to meet their well-being objectives.

Research

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

Carry out reviews

The Commissioner may conduct a review into how public bodies are taking account of the long-term impact of their decisions, and make recommendations based on the findings.

Make recommendations

The Commissioner can make recommendations to a public body about the steps it has taken or proposes to take to set and then meet its well-being objectives. Public bodies must take all reasonable steps to follow the recommendations made by the Commissioner.

Future Generations Report

The Commissioner must publish, a year before an Assembly election, a report containing the Commissioner's assessment of the improvements public bodies should make to achieve the well-being goals.

Advisory Panel

The Commissioner will be supported by an Advisory Panel. The Panel includes the other Wales Commissioners, the Chief Medical Officer for Wales, a representative of Natural Resources Wales, Wales TUC and Welsh business. The Commissioner may invite others to attend and Welsh Ministers can appoint new members.

National Indicators and Milestones

To help us know whether we are making progress towards achieving the well-being goals, Welsh Ministers ('Ministers') must set national indicators.

An indicator:

a. Must be expressed as a value or characteristic that can be measured quantitatively or qualitatively measured against a particular outcome;

b. May be measured over such a period of time as the Welsh Ministers deem appropriate;

c. May be measureable in relation to Wales or any part of Wales.

Part 2 'improved well-being' section 10 'national indicators and annual well-being report, paragraph (2).

Ministers must also set milestones to show expectations of what the indicators should show at certain points in the future. The Act enables Ministers to review and amend the national indicators and milestones so that they stay up to date and relevant. At the start of each financial year Ministers must publish an annual progress report setting out the progress made over the last year.

Future Trends Report

It's important that we understand the challenges that we will be facing, and have a clear picture of where we are heading. To do this, within the twelve months after an Assembly election, Ministers must publish a 'Future Trends Report' containing:

a. predictions of likely future trends in social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales; and

b. Any related analytical data and information that the Welsh Ministers consider appropriate.

Part 2 'Improved well-being' section 11 'Future Trends Report' paragraph (1)

In preparing the report, Ministers must take account of the United Nations' sustainable development goals and the impact of climate change on Wales.

Public Services Boards

The Act establishes Public Services Boards (PSBs) for each local authority area in Wales. The Members of each Public Services Board must include:

a. The local authority;

b. The Local Health Board for an area any part of which falls within the local authority area;

c. The Welsh Fire and Rescue Authority for an area any part of which falls within the local authority area;

d. The Natural Resources body for Wales

Part 4 'Public Services Boards' section 29 'Public Services Boards', paragraphs (1) and (2).

In addition to these members, each PSB must also invite the following people to participate on the Board who become 'invited participants' if they accept the invite:

- Welsh Ministers.
- The Chief constable for a police area, any part of which falls within the local authority area.
- The police and crime commissioner for a police area.
- Certain Probation Services.
- at least one body representing relevant voluntary organisations'.

PSBs can also invite other people who carry out public functions.

Each PSB must improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of its area by working to achieve the well-being goals. It will do this by:

- Assessing the state of economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being in its area; and
- Setting objectives that are designed to maximise the PSBs contribution to the well-being goals.

They must do this in accordance with the sustainable development principle.

Each PSB must prepare and publish a plan setting out its objectives and the steps it will take to meet them. This is called a Local Well-being Plan. It must say:

- Why the PSB feels their objectives will contribute within their local area to achieving the well-being goals, and
- How it has had regard to the Assessment of Local Well-being in setting its objectives and steps to take.

Each PSB will carry out an annual review of their plan showing their progress.

When producing their assessments of local well-being and Local Well-being plan, PSBs must consult widely.

Find out more

Website:

Welsh Government
www.gov.wales

The Wales We Want
www.thewaleswewant.co.uk

Sustainable Development Charter
www.sd-charter.net

National Assembly for Wales
www.assembly.wales

Twitter:

#FGActWales
#thewaleswewant / #ygymruagarem

Email:

Sustainable Development Branch, Welsh Government
FGActWales@wales.gsi.gov.uk

OGL

Digital ISBN: 978-1-4734-3468-4
Print ISBN: 978-1-4734-3467-7
© Crown Copyright 2015 WG 25447