

Describe the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and consider how it might aspire to improve the Social and Cultural Well-being of Wales

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) act 2015 (WBFGA) has been put into Practice as a response to how Care and providence of Care has changed in approximately the past decade (Welsh Government, 2016). This essay aims to outline how care has changed over this period, the impacts of the changes and why these changes have resulted in the introduction of the WBFGA, and how this act aims to improve Well-being for Wales and those within it, with particular considerations into Social and Cultural Well-Being and sustainability.

It has been proven there is a basic hierarchy of Needs in which a person must meet to obtain a good standard of living, and if the bottom layer of needs such as water, shelter and food are not met, it is impossible to climb the ladder. (Maslow 1943). the Beveridge report 1942 addressed this issue and as a result seen the introduction of the British Welfare state, a significant turning point in the caring society, following the second World War and Britain's defeat of Germany (Scott, 2009). Beveridge's scrutiny into social policy lead to the realisation of the need for change in the country to achieve the abolition of the 'five giants' which had burdened pre-war Great Britain. Beveridge perceived these giants to be 'squalor', 'disease', 'want', 'idleness' and 'ignorance', his idea was that to terminate these evils would be to provide care for the people of Britain from the 'cradle to the grave' (Beveridge 1942). Beveridge's admired report lay the path for the reforms put in place in post war Britain to eradicate these evils, for example the National Health Service was put in place to combat disease and gave free and adequate access to the highest standard of medical advice and care for everyone. Education for all until the age of fifteen was put in place to strive against ignorance. To tackle the problem of idleness full employment was introduced. Public housing was set up to eradicate squalor and combat the problem of homelessness, and to tackle want National Insurance was introduced to provide benefit for anyone in need (P. Alcock, 2014).

The focus of care shifted after World War Two and it was discovered that the structure of British families was readily beginning to change (Harding and Camping, 1996). It was also becoming more apparent that the welfare state was beginning to be viewed more in terms of analysing and looking at the individual rather than looking at society as a whole, when examining care, and how care and society are interlinking. With this shift to individualistic approach to care and social problems, it has also become clearer that at this time the main providence of care within the family setting was the responsibility of the woman, primarily the mother. It was also becoming apparent that with the devastation caused in families and the massive loss of men and husbands in World War Two, that many of these women were widowed or single parents, which in turn would have created an emphasis on the strain of the care role expected by women. With this change, women who were primarily expected to be the principle carers in the family were now needing to seek care or support themselves. For this reason, the National council for single women became aware of this and furthermore began to set up care networks and systems for single mothers and women, to address this issue and provide care for such. (Townsend, 1997). Another important advancement in providing care was the introduction of the Invalid Care Allowance which was put in place with the intention of providing financial support to carers whose positions in work were being jeopardised by having to temporarily leave or have time off work to care for elderly members of family in need. With this Invalid Care Allowance being applicable only to those leaving employment in order to provide care, women who would have been presumed to be undertaking housewife

roles and were already at home. Eventually in 1986 this benefit became applicable to these women, and no longer in place just to replace lost income when leaving work to fulfil care requirements (Johnson and Bytheway, 2008).

In the 1970's under Margaret Thatcher's conservative government economic stagnation and increasing public debt prompted a new form of classic liberalism, called neoliberalism (Smith, 2014). Neoliberalism ideology states welfare for people, society or communities was not important or necessary for society to work well as a whole. The idea is that the role of government is to ensure rules of 'free market – economic profit, technological progress and growth and development' were in place (McGregor, 2001). Individualism was a concept enforced by neoliberals, individualists would 'replace the concepts of public goods and the community with individual responsibility' this meant that humans should favour themselves and not rely on neighbour or society to guide them into succeeding. In turn neoliberalism can be seen as economy versus poverty. The introduction of privatization and deregulation of public enterprise such as railways or building of new roads to generate a free market, was often to the detriment of the welfare state and the benefit system which affected individuals, families and vulnerable members of society (McGregor, 2001).

In contrast to this, as time progressed the government targeted more focus into means of providing more sufficient care in society. Care can be provided both formally and informally. Formal care is provided by government organisations with paid staff, for the purpose of this essay an example of formal care would be child day-care centres. The advantages of parents using day care centres to provide care for their children would be that it gives them the opportunity to go to work, while leaving their children in the hands of safe and professionally trained staff provided by the day care, children also benefit by learning to build relationships with other children (baby centre, 2016). However, it can be argued that parents and children may lack strong bonds with each other due to the absence of time spent together, if deciding to use children daycare facilities. (Miller, 2017) so therefore there are arguments for and against. Informal care however is provided by family or friends (Alcock and May, 2014). This care is provided not for financial gain, but because the caregiver feels the recipient needs support, this support may be physical, emotional, cognitive or regarding mental health. This care would usually be provided by children, children in law, a spouse or a partner (We Care, N/D). There are also hidden financial and emotional costs in providing informal care. An example of this would be that 27% of informal caregivers have admitted to their provision of care having an impact on their own relationships, and personal relations, as established by the Centre of Modern Families and Scottish Women in a study into the cost of care. The same study proved almost a quarter of the people in the study also claimed to be put in a position of financial strain at a cost of their care provision (CMF, 2018).

Currently, there are problems with the system of funding social care in the UK, an example of this is the problem surrounding funding of residential care costs which are means tested. In 2010 people requiring residential care who have assets of over £23,250 which includes their value of property, are required to fund their own care. Individuals with less than £14,250 can have all their care home costs covered by social services. People falling between the two figures will have an amount of the care cost paid for by the state. This system is seen as flawed and unfair, penalising people who have saved throughout their lives whilst people who have not saved are eligible for state funded care (Manjit Gheera, 2010). In Wales it is recognised that the current system needs change because Wales has more people with lower financial means

compared to the rest of the UK. Wales is proposing changes that takes this into account, in 2011 Wales introduced a limit that a person can be charged for care either formally or informally. The limit is currently £80 per week, in 2016 the Welsh Government stated that the amount of capital a person can keep paying for residential care would be increased. The proposal is to increase the two amounts to £24,000 to £50,000 which includes all capital owned by a person unless a dependent relative remains in the property, this amount was increased to £40,000 in April, 2014. Furthermore, some of the problems in funding of social care are being recognised and addressed in Wales (Welsh Government, 2018).

The definition of well-being has been debated since the third century B.C when Aristotle's concept was a state of feeling healthy happy and prosperous. In the past the driving force and key focus in research surrounding wellbeing and mental health has concentrated significantly on poor mental health, rather than looking for ways to promote and encourage well-being before it becomes a problem, Public Health England believe that it is fundamental to reflect on both good and bad mental health in doing this they believe it will develop a better understanding of how to tackle well-being. Public Health England describe well-being as having 'a positive state of mind and body, feeling safe and able to cope, with a sense of connection with people, communities and the wider environment' (Public Health England, 2017). Wales also agree with the idea of tackling wellbeing proactively, and sustaining the wellbeing of Wales and the people and communities within. (Welsh Government, 2016, a)

In 2014 it was clear that Wales faced several challenges and problems, such as poverty, jobs and growth. Although these problems may be issues of the past, Welsh Government recognises it is key for the sustainability of the country to ensure problems like these will not be a problem for our future generations. As a result of this the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (WBFGA 2015) was introduced. The Act also targets improving 'the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales' (Welsh Government, 2016). The idea of achieving these aims is underpinned by the pillars of sustainability. Sustainability can be defined as meeting "the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (World Commission of Environment and Development, 1987). This means that all public bodies in Wales must ensure to think not only about Wales today, but must consider Wales tomorrow, with the focus being meeting Well-being goals (Welsh Government, 2015). This sustainability theory interlinks the ideas of, environmental, economic and social development and their fundamental value in assisting a community to prosper and run effectively (Loucks and Gladwell, 1999). As research has progressed a fourth pillar has been recognised as equally as important as the original three, this pillar being culture (Scerri and Paul, 2010; UCLG, 2010). These four pillars are relevant to the WBFGA 2015 because the WBFGA 2015 sets out to achieve seven goals, these goals being: a prosperous Wales, a Resilient Wales, a healthier Wales, a more equal Wales, a Wales of cohesive communities, A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language and a globally responsible Wales (Welsh government, 2016). The four pillars of sustainability underpin these goals.

The WBFGA 2015 has introduced 46 National indicators for Wales, which address the aspects of the seven wellbeing goals, and these are controlled and reviewed under the auspices of the Welsh Ministers with consultancy of the Commissioner of Future Generations for Wales, Sophie Howe. The National indicators 'must be expressed as a value or characteristic that can be measured quantitatively or qualitatively against a particular outcome'. The Welsh ministers

must also produce and publish annual reports at the end on each financial year, reviewing the indicators and to what extent they are being met (legislation. Gov, 2015). Pembrokeshire County Council's recently published improvement review for 2017/18 would be an example of how the Welsh government are striving to meet the well-being 7 National goals, which can be measured by the national indicators. The 21st Century school building programme has been created by Welsh government with aims such as improving 'the quality of schools buildings' and ensuring 'places are available to serve local pupil demand (Welsh Government, N/D) Pembrokeshire County Council have been funded £38.3 million as an investment into building 11-19 new schools, in order to make an investment into creating 'learning environments that are fit for the future' (Pembrokeshire County Council, 2018). the development of Pembroke School to Henry Tudor School, in Pembroke school is an example of this project in practice, and furthermore aims to 'improve learner outcomes at all levels and offer a rich and stimulating curriculum, so that the highest standards for all are achieved (Pembrokeshire.Gov, 2018). Such a project is underpinned by social sustainability goals (Loucks and Gladwell, 1999) and would aim to meet the terms of National indicator 22 'Percentage of people in education, employment or training, measured in different groups' (Welsh Government, 2016 b) as the project aims to create learners fit for employment in the future, and hopes to ensure they leave with the qualifications in which will help them achieve this. Welsh Government are also aiming to improve cultural sustainability for Wales.

Cultural Well-being is being actively integrated in to policy making and procedure through many aspects of life such as generational integration and promoting welsh language. Research conducted into culture and wellbeing in York found that introducing participation in cultural activities has a significant impact on improving public health and improving mental health wellbeing. The use of Cultural prescription has been proven to improve social connections and improve wellbeing. This process tackles problems such as 'reducing social isolation and loneliness' and 'enabling people to make connections across generations' (Culture and Wellbeing-York, 2018). Simple changes #41 by Future Generations commissioner Sophie Howe aims to 'improve the conditions so that it is 'easier for older and younger people to come together in community events[...] swap skills, sing together in intergenerational choirs' and other activities therefore improving cultural and social wellbeing in wales, by creating meaningful connections, and participating in a range of activities which can enrich, and encourage culture (Future Generations Commissioner for Wales, 2018).

Future Generations Commissioner, Sophie Howe also believes "A society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language, and which encourages people to participate in the arts, sports and recreation" should be promoted and put into practice in Wales. Howe believes, all access points in the public sector should be promoting the Welsh Language and encouraging Bilingual speakers to speak and work in whatever language feels most comfortable to them and believes non-Welsh-speakers should have access to the assistance needed to learn to speak in the Welsh Language. Howe believes by encouraging the Welsh language throughout society will encourage cultural wellbeing. (Future Generations Commissioner for Wales, 2018). An example of this in practice would be Sport Wales', Welsh Language scheme. Sport Wales promote bilingual education through the medium of Welsh or English. Sport Wales provide Welsh language training throughout their organisation as they believe it is an important that their workers are confident and comfortable in providing their services in the medium of Welsh (Sport Wales, 2017). In doing this, Sport Wales are creating

connections for Welsh language speakers who may not have been able to build these connections in other sports groups which do not provide Bilingual education. Through Promotion of Welsh Language, performance indicators, 36 ('percentage of people who can speak Welsh daily...') and performance indicator 34 ('percentage of people who can speak Welsh') are being enforced, in order to achieve 'a Wales of Vibrant Culture and Welsh Language', and 'A Wales of Cohesive Communities' (Future Generations Commissioner for Wales, 2018).

To conclude, throughout history care for society has changed rapidly from The Beveridge report 1942 (Beveridge, 1942) to the modern ongoing need for change. This need for change has been recognised in Wales and by Welsh Government as a problem which has been addressed with the introduction of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The act aims to create a sustainable society for future generations (Welsh Government, 2016). The idea of sustainable development is now at the fore-front of legislation and is seen as a measure which will improve wellbeing, culturally, economically, environmentally and socially in order to achieve (Welsh Government, 2016).

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