



Cymru Can Newsletter: Health and Well-being



Appeal from Derek: Prevention is better than cure

Health is more than hospitals and waiting lists.

We're working with organisations across Wales to keep people well for longer through a whole-system preventative approach.

We have made it [one of our missions](#) to support a transformation of the way we keep people healthy in Wales.

As a team, we are helping public bodies to work together on the root causes of ill health, address inequalities and keep people well through preventative action.

Positively, the WFG Act has already led to more holistic national policies which put prevention and systems-thinking at their heart including [A Healthier Wales](#) and the new [Mental Health and Well-being Strategy 2025-2035](#).

Our NHS has increased their long-term plans from three to beyond 10 years, ensuring our actions today also improve our future, and prevention is now a strategic priority for NHS resource plans, meaning our NHS must report on their preventative activity and progress to secure funding.



“I took the role of Chief Medical Officer in Wales because I fell in love with the WFG Act.

If we implement it effectively, a Wales where everyone has a fair and equal opportunity to live a long and healthy life regardless of their background won't be a distant dream, it will be our reality.

And I want to work with the people of Wales to make this our reality.

Professor Isabel Oliver, Chief Medical Officer for Wales

But more needs to be done. Across Wales, our health workforce and budgets are dwindling, our health is worsening and demand for support is growing.

The [Well-being of Wales 2025 report](#) shows inequalities in healthy life expectancy, meaning communities facing barriers can expect to be ill for the last 20 years of their lives, our mental health is continuing to worsen, and child poverty is still too high.

In our [Future Generations Report 2025](#), I'm calling for Welsh Government and public bodies to **ringfence prevention funding and work collaboratively to reduce inequalities through action on the wider determinants of health**; the wider social, economic and environmental factors that affect our health including our food, education, housing, employment and access to culture and services.



To ensure we are collectively taking action to improve Wales' health while also addressing the climate crisis, fixing our food system and shifting to a well-being economy, our team is:

- Supporting [Welsh Government's commitment for Wales to be a Marmot nation](#), ensuring it aligns with the WFG Act and transforms not just policy but on the ground change
- Working to reduce obesity by focusing on access to healthy diets with Public Health Wales, and creating guidance for local authorities on how to improve their food systems with [Food Sense Wales](#) (being published in November 2025)
- Supporting bold implementation of the new Mental Health Strategy through convening and advising decision-makers
- Expanding our pilot on preventative spend to ensure more public bodies across Wales know how to shift their budgets to invest in prevention
- Connecting the dots between climate and health. Join us at Public Health Network Cymru's webinar [What role does biodiversity play in creating healthy, sustainable communities](#) (November 12) and at [Wales Climate Week](#) (November 3-5)

Wales cannot afford to keep treating preventable diseases without addressing their underlying causes.

We must prioritise long-term, prevention-based solutions to build a healthier, more resilient Cymru.

Cymru Can.

Building a Healthier, Fairer, Safer and Stronger Gwent

"The Well-being of Future Generations (WFG) Act is one of the most progressive legislative frameworks for public health in the 21st century.

It sets out a bold vision for a Wales where everyone can live longer, healthier, and more fulfilling lives - regardless of their background.

In Gwent, however, we are facing stark inequalities. Residents People in Torfaen, Newport, Caerphilly, and Blaenau Gwent are disproportionately affected by preventable illnesses and premature death.

That's why the WFG Act is central to how we deliver healthcare in Gwent and has influenced our commitment to being a Marmot region – the first Marmot region in Wales."



[Read the full blog by Professor Tracy Daszkiewicz](#), Executive Director of Public Health at Aneurin Bevan Local Health Board and President of the UK Faculty of Public Health, on the inspiration of the WFG Act on Gwent's shift to preventative action for our health.

Pilot on preventative spend

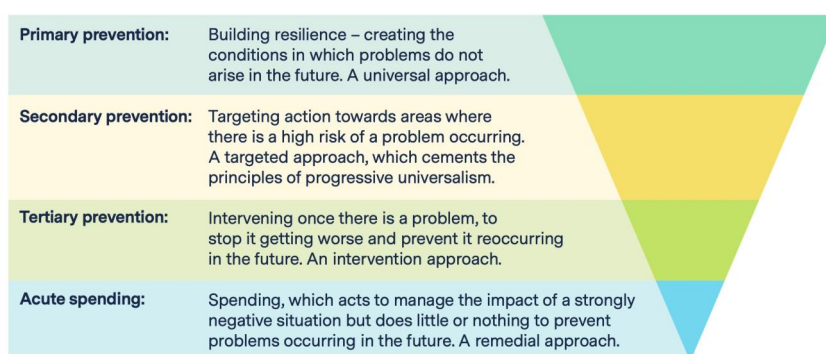
Budget cuts and short-term budget cycles are often named as key barriers to investing in prevention, but no organisation we have spoken with knows how much of their budget is actually spent on prevention.

What we do know is that if we delay investing in prevention, our councils and health boards could go bankrupt, [our health will continue to decline and inequalities will rise](#).

We need to tackle the root causes of issues that impact on our public services including poor-quality employment, social isolation and housing insecurity.

That's why we're piloting a project on preventative spend and supporting public bodies under the WFG Act to understand how they can invest in our future through shifting investment upstream into primary prevention.

In our [Future Generations Report 2025](#), we recommended that **Welsh Government should ring-fence funding for prevention which increases over time** and that **public bodies should use the agreed definition of prevention between Welsh Government and my office to map their preventative spend and invest progressively more upstream towards primary prevention**.



Aligned with the Scottish Government and The Health Foundation’s methodologies, we have [worked with public bodies and CIPFA \(Chartered Institute for Public Finance and Accounting\) to develop an assessment tool](#) that will:

- Keep the focus on the importance of investing in prevention.
- Find out how much public bodies currently invest in prevention and track it.
- Create further change by showing the different types of preventative activities public bodies are doing.

This work aims to **transform how we structure our budgets in Wales**, removing barriers around preventative spend and lead to better outcomes and savings in the long-term.

We have already started prototyping the work with **Hywel Dda University Health Board, two local authorities and one national body** to map how they are investing in prevention and are in discussion with others to join the project.

“Health Boards were constituted as population health systems, supporting our communities to lead healthy lives, well lived. Understanding how our expenditure is supporting our communities to proactively achieve this is a crucial yet challenging endeavour.

It’s been a pleasure to work with the Future Generations Commissioner on this project to help us increase our understanding and identify opportunities to deliver more effective preventative healthcare for our communities, now and for the future.

I'm proud of the insights we have achieved together, and look forward to seeing how this develops as the approach matures.”

Huw Thomas, Hywel Dda University Health Board, Director of Finance

In the next financial year, we will be rolling this work out further and supporting more public bodies to map their preventative spend, either collaboratively or independently.

Every budget going forward needs to invest in prevention.

Our health and our pockets cannot risk otherwise.

For more information on this work and how you can get involved, please email us at contactus@futuregenerations.wales.

Cymru Can in Action: Health and Well-being

The WFG Act is transforming how we think about and deliver health and care services in Wales and is bringing minds from across the world to come to Wales and together to take action.

Actif North Wales

Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board in collaboration with [Actif North Wales](#) is tackling health inequalities and boosting physical activity through place-based pilot projects in Anglesey, Denbighshire, Flintshire and Gwynedd.

Actif Coordinators worked with local people and organisations to understand what was getting in the way of keeping people active in each area. Through uplifting existing strengths, they've supported more opportunities for the community to be active in ways that felt local, fun and right for them.

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Spread and Scale Academy

Across Wales, the [Spread & Scale Academy](#) is helping teams deliver bold innovations with measurable results, but its future funding is uncertain. Some of the ground-breaking projects include:

- **Optimise project** at [Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board](#) has cut the average length of stay from 29 to 13 days and doubled weekly discharges through a culture shift to looking at root causes and removing communication barriers.
- The [Cardiac Intensive Therapy Unit team in Swansea Bay University Health Board](#) has saved £2.1m annually and reduced emissions by 211,765 kg CO₂ through **sustainability initiatives** including waste management and electronic documentation.
- [Cardiff and Vale University Health Board](#) helped develop the ‘**nitrous oxide cracker**’ machine which eliminates the high carbon emissions from using ‘gas and air’ during labour.



1 - [Cardiff and Vale University Health Board](#)



2 - [Swansea Bay University Health Board](#)

One Health Concept in Aberystwyth University

The nursing programme in Aberystwyth University is incorporating [One Health principles](#) into their work, recognising the inter-dependence of human, animal and environmental health. Some of the ways they're incorporating the principles include:

- Lessons in the lambing shed to better understand the well-being of agricultural families and rural communities
- Collaboration with veterinary students on zoonosis diseases (diseases that can jump from animals to humans) and their impact on future health
- Growing vegetables and plants with local community groups in the green space outside the Healthcare Education Centre
- Sessions with Cariad Pet Therapy on the benefits of pet therapy and their impact in health and social care settings

Reducing falls in care homes

Older people falling accounts for more than 80% of all ambulance call outs and delayed recovery can lead to more serious health impacts.

A new approach to falls management in collaboration with the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust (WAST) has led to a [25% reduction in WAST call outs for falls in Powys](#) and an [80% reduction in ambulance call outs in Swansea Bay](#) with the average time care home residents spent on the floor reducing from 160 to 30 minutes.

For more examples of positive action from across Wales, read the [case studies on our website](#).

Resources for health teams

- [Beyond the Present: How to apply long-term thinking to reduce health inequalities](#) - our toolkit with long-term thinking methods and case studies.
- [Investing in a Healthier Wales: prioritising prevention](#) - Public Health Wales' report on the value of prevention and guidance for decision-makers on where to invest in prevention to improve health and reduce inequalities.
- [Best Start in Life: An Early Years Framework for Action](#) - Public Health Wales' framework to support organisations in identifying, understanding and prioritising the actions needed to build a stronger and more impactful early years system.
- [Social value e-guide for public health](#) - Public Health Wales' guide for public health professionals on using Social Return on Investment and Social Cost-Benefit Analysis to guide spending and investment decisions.

- [Social Return on Investment of Sport in Wales](#) - Sports Wales' report on the importance of investing in sports which contributes £5.98bn in social value to Wales.



3 - [Beyond the Present: How to apply long-term thinking to reduce health inequalities](#)



4 - [Social Return on Investment of Sport in Wales](#)

DEMOS



THE PREVENTATIVE SHIFT

HOW CAN WE EMBED
PREVENTION AND ACHIEVE
LONG TERM MISSIONS

A DEMOS - HEALTH FOUNDATION DISCUSSION PAPER

ANDREW O'BRIEN
POLLY CURTIS
DAVID FINCH

FEBRUARY 2025

5 - [*The Preventative Shift - Demos and The Health Foundation*](#)

- [**Communities of practice support and development**](#) - Social Care Wales' four communities of practice bringing people from across sectors together to share knowledge.
- [**Hapus**](#) – Led by Public Health Wales, the Hapus Community supports organisations in improving mental health and well-being; we are proud to have recently joined the Hapus Strategic Partnership.
- [**The Preventative Shift**](#) - Demos and The Health Foundation's discussion paper on how to ringfence preventative spending including the culture shift required.

- [Choosing a Healthier Future](#) - National Institute for Public Health and the Environment in the Netherlands' Public Health Foresight Study on the five major challenges to public health and services by 2050 and how we can address them.

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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