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Cymru

**Future  
Generations**  
Commissioner  
for Wales

# The Future Generations Report 2020



**Let's create the future together**



# COVID-19

## Publication of the Future Generations Report

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The COVID-19 crisis has significantly changed the world we live in within the space of a few months. However, to meet my statutory duties to publish a Future Generations report a year and one day before the next National Assembly for Wales elections, I have had to publish the Future Generations Report 2020, during the ongoing Coronavirus crisis.

This is a major report, which ideally would not be arriving during this global pandemic, when attention is understandably elsewhere. It has been written over the last year, drawing on information gathered since the Act came into place four years ago. The ability to provide in-depth analysis of the implications of the particular situation, therefore, is limited.

However, I have drawn out some early reflections. I am clear that while the implications of this virus are very difficult for us now, there is likely to be a ripple effect for many years to come. Our actions today, and as we emerge from this crisis, will determine whether we can mitigate the negatives and embed the positives.

We are living through very difficult circumstances. From the pressure on public services, the devastating loss of lives, isolation from loved ones and the potential for long-term damage to the economy, jobs and livelihoods. Despite this, I am also seeing some excellent practice emerging in how public bodies are responding. Many of these responses are in line with the aspirations of the Well-being of Future Generations Act – the partnership working, engagement with the private sector to find innovative solutions, new ways of working and increased use of technology in delivering services, the decrease in carbon emissions, and the programmes which are working with communities to provide services, are particularly notable.

**Never has the need to think and plan for the future been so relevant. Many of the findings and recommendations in this report seek to highlight how we can do that better. In every crisis there are two phases: the first where you respond and the second where you learn. To be successful you must have both.**



The Well-being of Future Generations Act provides a guiding framework for how we should seek to respond in the short, medium and long-term to this crisis. The Act allows us to make the right decisions, to help us shift towards a longer-term and preventative outlook on how we run our society and public services.

In the months ahead, working with the other Commissioners and other key organisations in Wales, I will be providing advice and sharing examples of good and bad practice resulting from the COVID-19 outbreak. This is to ensure Wales continues to move towards the vision set out in the Act and does not move backwards in the aftermath of the pandemic.

While it will be crucial for all public services to respond to this report in time, I have made it clear that I do not expect them to respond in the coming months, while they are in midst of dealing with the pandemic. It is right that they focus their attention on dealing with this in the immediate term. I will review with Audit Wales this position as the situation evolves to determine when I will expect a response from public bodies to my findings and recommendations.

Like everyone in Wales and throughout the world, I would like to express gratitude to all those helping our society to face these unprecedented times - our health-care workers, emergency services and shop workers, civil servants and everyone providing essential services to the people of Wales. We owe a great debt to these people, but we also owe it to them to ensure that as far as we possibly can, we use this crisis to secure the change that the Well-being of Future Generations Act is seeking, and make our contribution to leaving Wales and the world better than we found it.

**"Life always awaits for a crisis to occur before revealing itself at its most brilliant."**

 Paul Coelho



# Table of Contents

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## Introduction

COVID-19 statement	01
Foreword	04
Thank you	07
Purpose of the report	12
Legal requirements	13
Overview of the Act	14
Using the Act to produce this report	16
How to use this report	20
Structure of this report	23

## CHAPTER 1 - The vision

Why does well-being matter?	26
The challenges ahead	27
Wales and the World: the global context	28
The Wales we want in 2050	34
Where next?	36



# Foreword

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I have been in post as Wales' first Future Generations Commissioner since 2016. During that time, it's fair to say I've talked about future generations with just about everyone I've met.

From global leaders, to the people living in our communities in Wales, to chief executives of businesses, to my local hairdresser. Future generations are everyone's business – that is becoming increasingly apparent whether policy makers like it or not. Intergenerational justice is no longer a niche issue.

Our younger generations are calling out the failures of past decisions, and sadly, often decisions in the continuing present that fail to take into account their futures – embarrassing, perhaps, but necessary. And with youth movements building across the world, alongside a reduction of the voting age here in Wales, policymakers can no longer ignore issues relating to future generations.

Many countries are looking to follow Wales' lead in improving the lives of their future generations, but we were brave in taking that first step.

While legislation and policy changes for future generations are in train in Portugal, Gibraltar, Canada and even within UK Parliament, Wales remains the only country to legislate for the needs of future generations and to embed the delivery of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals into law.

We have made quite a splash with our Well-being of Future Generations Act, but I am realistic that while many talk about a journey to implementation, what we are embarking on here is more of an expedition. Something you must have the bravery for, the tools and kit for and the determination to do difficult things; things that have never been done before.



## Sophie Howe

### Future Generations Commissioner for Wales

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Across Wales, I am seeing the legislative framework inspire and deliver on each of these aspects, but this is usually instead of seeing all these things as essential parts of holistically bringing about long-term change. We need now, to be bold in the ways we make that a reality.

So, we are four years in. What's changing?

Writing the report has given me the perfect opportunity to take stock of what's been achieved so far, compiling the information, the conversations and the intelligence my office and I have gathered over the past four years. And it's fair to say that good things are happening. That things are changing because of the Act.



I can see that there is a growing movement of change, with people who believe in improving the social, cultural, environmental and economic well-being of Wales daring to deliver differently within their own organisations and wider, often amidst a backdrop of political uncertainty and continued austerity.

I am seeing individual champions of the Act, and its ways of working, change the way transport planning is being done in our capital city, reforming the way we think about keeping older people well, shifting beyond delivering 'services' to focusing on what matters to them. I'm seeing politicians reject the status quo of addressing congestion through building more roads, instead looking for solutions which are better for the well-being of people and planet.

I am seeing the framework of the law driving contracting decisions so that investment in a new rail contract is done in a way that will also help tackle poverty through provision of cheaper fares in more disadvantaged areas, will use a supply chain of social enterprise and will be using energy sourced in Wales.

I am seeing national policy change to support well-being, climate resilience and restoring nature, with placemaking being the core principle in how we plan, design and build communities.

I am seeing the roll out of a new education curriculum in which young people will be supported to be creative, enterprising and ethically informed citizens.

But while things are changing, more needs to happen across the public sector to make the well-being goals a reality. Where good things are happening, they appear to be pieces of a jigsaw that don't always fit into the wider puzzle of the organisational approach.

I'm also seeing gaps in implementation. Sometimes, it seems we have focused on the process rather than the cultural change needed. Sometimes there seems to be a lack of support and resources to help people shift from old to new ways of thinking, and sometimes, what Government does in practice is not in line with what it says it will do on paper, and indeed, law.

Despite being the ones who took the Act forward, I have found that Welsh Government have not sufficiently resourced the implementation of the Act in terms of leadership development and delivering the infrastructure required to drive change.

Throughout the remainder of my term, I will continue to support and challenge everyone who wants to contribute to our national goals, and will be stronger in my approach to public bodies who are failing to implement the transformational changes needed.

But where I take hope from, on a daily basis, is often from the simple changes. Despite Brexit and austerity, I hear every day about the smaller projects and people who have fought to get an initiative off the ground because they know it is the right thing to do. The people who see a different way of doing things and are unafraid to call out those with their blinkers on.



The mum who campaigns for a ban on plastic straws within the school. The civil servant who rewrites a procurement policy despite constant opposition and barriers. The teenager who writes to their local Assembly Member to question how the government are responding to the climate emergency. The Minister who asks the challenging questions and won't take no for an answer. They are the people who make this legislation a reality. The people I like to refer to as the 'frustrated champions'. There are many in our public sector in Wales, but they're often in all walks of life.



Sometimes, when people talk about the future, it seems to be all automation and robots. Some seem to think there's some technological silver bullet that will solve all our issues. Maybe one day, that might become a reality, but that's not where I get my hope for the future from.

I get my hope from this growing number of frustrated champions out there agitating, ruffling feathers, speaking truth to power and challenging leaders to make it a reality.

With them, we're building a movement for change here in Wales that will echo throughout the rest of the world.



**You should come and join us.**



(Left to Right) Mary Robinson, Gro Brundtland and Sophie Howe



# Thank you very much

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Meet my fantastic Team who worked so hard with me to produce this report and advice



**Marie Brousseau-Navarro**

Director of Policy, Legislation and Innovation

Marie was the overall Delivery Manager for this report, the driving force behind its production, participating in every task and coordinating the teams and all the work for the PDF and website versions of the report. She was our writer of the Planning Chapter and many other sections.



**Rebecca Brown**

Communications Planner

Rebecca was our main editor, our writer of Chapter 1, a proof-reader and our communications lead.



**Susan Crutcher**

Office Manager

Susan was the co-ordinator of the support team, making sure we had the right help at the right time, a translator and editor.



**Abby Dickinson**

Digital Innovator

Abby was our designer leading on both the creation and realisation of the PDF version and the website version of the report.



**Jacob Ellis**

Lead Change Maker

Jacob was our advisor on international elements, big ideas and public affairs lead. He was an advisor on involvement and supported the writing of the section on A Globally Responsible Wales, the keys findings, recommendations and translations.





## Amanda Evans

Head of HR

Amanda provided the behind the scenes moral and well-being support and the resourcing, governance and risk work.



## Sam Guy

Team Support Officer

Sam was one of our researchers and proof-readers.



## Najma Hashi

Team Support Officer

Najma was one of our researchers, proof-readers and helped with the Chapter on A More Equal Wales.



## Elle Henley-Herat

Change Maker

Elle was the lead on the involvement work and writer of the Involvement Annexe.



## Alice Horn

Analyst Officer

Alice has been one of the researchers for the project and helped to write the procurement chapter.



## Rhiannon Jenkins

Apprentice

Rhiannon co-ordinated all of our Welsh translation and for all the Welsh versions of the report.



## Bonnie Navarra

Lead Change Maker

Bonnie was one of the main writers for the sections of the report on Housing and Adverse Childhood Experiences.



## Helen Nelson

Corporate Planner

Helen was one of our main editors for all chapters of the report, an advisor on involvement and the link with my statutory consultees. She was our chapter writer for My Focus and contributed to many chapters and supported the writing team.



## Sang-Jin Park

Finance and Corporate Governance Officer

Sang-Jin provided the behind the scenes moral and well-being support and the resourcing, governance and risk work.



## Louisa Petchey

Shared post with [Public Health Wales on Futures](#)

Louisa was main researcher and advisor on the futures elements of this report.





## Eurgain Powell

Change Maker

Eurgain was our writer for the Transport, Decarbonisation and Procurement sections. She also supported the translation and design team.



## Clare Johnson

Stakeholder Officer

Clare was our main involvement officer until her retirement in February 2020, and helped organise most stakeholder events.



## Hollie Leslie

Team Support officer

Hollie was one of our main designers of the Welsh versions of the Report and a translator.



## Cathy Madge

Lead Change Maker

Cathy was writer for the sections in Chapters 3 and 5 on Health and Budget; she also wrote the section on A More Equal Wales.



## Petranka Malcheva

Correspondence and Legal Officer

Pep was one of the main researchers and editors for most chapters of this report; she was a key writer of the Cultural Wales, ACEs, Housing chapters and supported the design team.





### Heledd Morgan

Lead Change Maker

Heledd was our writer for the Cultural Change Chapter and the section on Skills for the Future. She conducted most of the analysis on well-being objectives and was a main writer on the chapter to set good well-being objectives. She also supported the translation team.



### Christian Servini

Change Maker

Christian was our writer for Chapter 3 - progress on the seven well-being goals, and the chapter on setting good well-being objectives.



### Helen Verity

Director of Finance and Corporate Governance

Helen provided the behind the scenes moral and well-being support and the resourcing, governance and risk work.

## Thank you

I am grateful for the oversight provided by my Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC)



Alan Morris

ARAC Chair



Jocelyn Davies

ARAC Member



John Dwight

ARAC Member



Gareth Madge

ARAC Member



Jonathan Morgan

ARAC Member



Fran Targett OBE

ARAC Member



## Purpose of the Report

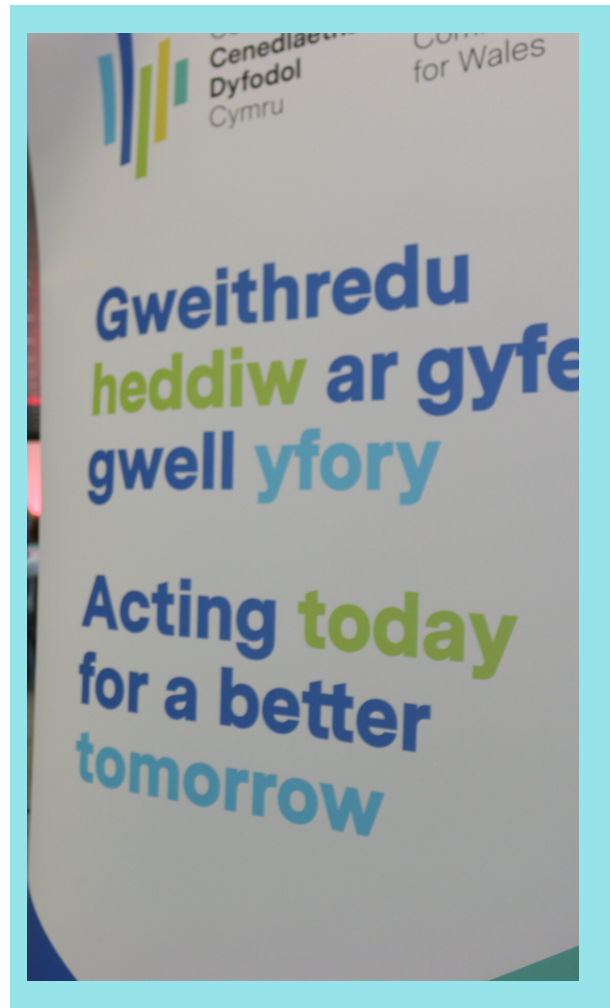
Producing a Future Generations Report every five years, which provides an assessment of the improvements public bodies should make in relation to their well-being objectives, is a statutory duty of the Future Generations Commissioner. But more than just meeting a 'duty' this report is designed to explain clearly and in many different ways what improving our collective well-being in accordance with the Act is all about.

This means looking at the different elements of the Act such as the five ways of working, the well-being goals but also through real life examples and topics. I want to explain how the Act should work in practice and seek to illustrate the vision, ambition and tools to achieve this.

I want to celebrate our achievements so far and I have included numerous examples of good practice already taking place throughout Wales. However, I will also call out where progress is falling short and point at all the opportunities which we should not miss in the present or immediate future.

I am realistic and there is still a long way to go. Public services in Wales are at the start of the journey. They have found their feet; all the elements of the legislation are now in place and we now need to work together to increase the pace of change.

This report provides practical advice, guidance and tools for public bodies grappling with making the aspirations set out in this groundbreaking law a reality for people in Wales. It is also intended to inspire action by showcasing big and small actions that are taking in place in Wales and across the world.



# Legal Requirements

The Future Generations Report is a legal duty on the Commissioner under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 ("the Act"). This is what the Act demands:

## Section 23 Future Generations report:

(1) The Commissioner must prepare and publish, before the end of each reporting period, a report containing the Commissioner's assessment of the improvements public bodies should make in order to set and meet well-being objectives in accordance with the sustainable development principle.

(2) The Commissioner's report must include, in particular, an assessment of how public bodies should -

(a) Better safeguard the ability of future generations to meet their needs, and,

(b) Take greater account of the long-term impact of the things that they do."

## Overall, this report must include:

- An assessment of how public bodies can better safeguard the ability of future generations to meet their own needs; and take greater account of the long-term impact of the things they do.
- A summary of evidence gathered, and activities undertaken, by the Commissioner during the reporting period.
- A summary of the reviews conducted by the Commissioner; an account of any research or other study undertaken.
- Any other information the Commissioner considers appropriate.

This first time around, the reporting period is 6th May 2017 – 5th May 2020, and our report must be published by the 5th May 2020.

Once published, Welsh Ministers, public bodies and Public Services Boards (PSBs) must take into account the report in setting, or revising, their well-being objectives.



# Overview of the Act

In 2015, the National Assembly for Wales passed ‘the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act’, committing our nation’s sustainable development ambitions within legislation and creating the post of Future Generations Commissioner to promote sustainable development; to act as ‘guardian for future generations’.

The Act is about ensuring that the decisions taken today are not at the expense of future generations’ well-being, and that future generations will be able to meet their own needs.

To this date, Wales remains the only country to impose duties to protect the needs of future generations and to embed the United Nations Sustainable Development goals into law. This led the United Nations to say, "what Wales is doing today, we hope the world will do tomorrow."

Quite simply, the Act is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. Crucially, all four dimensions of well-being are as important as each other; the economy cannot be prioritised at the expense of the environment. Wales is the first country in the world to also recognise the importance of cultural well-being.



Sophie Howe and Canadian Sustainable Development Commissioner Julie Gelfand



The Act applies to 44 public bodies in Wales, including the Welsh Government, to ensure they are thinking about the long-term when taking decisions, and to carry out the sustainable development principle. It includes all local authorities, national parks, national bodies such as the National Library and National Museum Wales, health boards, and local fire and rescue authorities.

The legislation also sets out seven national well-being goals, setting out our aspirations for the Wales we want.

Public bodies and Public Services Boards are required to contribute to these goals by setting their own objectives and steps to seek to achieve them, and then they must take all reasonable steps to meet these objectives they chose for themselves.

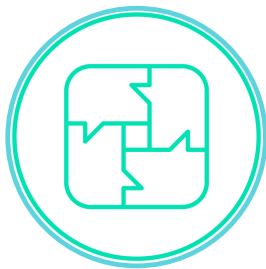
The Act also sets out five ways of working (known as ‘the Sustainable Development Principle’) that public bodies should use to achieve that vision. They are: long-term, prevention, integration, collaboration and involvement.






# Using the Act to produce this report

A core purpose of my office is to ‘walk the talk’ of the Act and lead by example. We have used, as we require others to do, the ‘five ways of working’ to produce this report, and my advice throughout this report should help us on our journey towards meeting the national well-being goals.



## Integration

Almost every aspect of how I describe progress and encourage change makes connection across a number of the goals – showing how public bodies can think about ‘what’ they do to make the biggest contribution to the wellbeing goals and then ‘how’ they do it maximising opportunities for multiple benefits. This report consolidates and brings together the advice and resources I have provided to date. It reflects all the strands of my work so far, the evidence I have gathered, the lessons learnt and it will be the basis for the work my team will undertake in the coming years. It also makes clear references to the work of other organisations as appropriate.



## Prevention

Throughout this report, I have illustrated the importance of prevention and highlighted why it is integral to the Sustainable Development Principle.



## Long-term

This report takes stock of what Wales has already achieved with the Act and looks to the long-term trends and predictions to understand what we need to do differently. My advice in this report is based on analysis of future trends, discussions with experts and using methods of futures-thinking and forecasting. My intention is to be able to give an objective overview of what the long-term could and should look like for Wales, and the report will contrast where we are heading to with where we want to go.





## Collaboration

A report of this magnitude could not have been produced in isolation or by my office alone. This has been a culmination of all of my collaborative working over the last four years, from engagement with the public, stakeholders, the voluntary sector, academics, experts, the private sector, politicians, community groups, town and community councils, to international groups. I have sought to involve and collaborate with my statutory Advisory Panel, the other Commissioners and Audit Wales for example, to ensure that our powers and recommendations complement each other and avoid confusion for the public bodies we all support or regulate. My office has been built on the principles of collaboration with over thirty secondments, placements and joint appointment with other public bodies, third sector organisations and academic institutions. My team has also worked closely with trusted partners, who have advised, challenged, supported us and shared their insight for each of the Chapters. I am grateful to everyone who has taken time to contribute views and ideas, read drafts, share big ideas, written to us and who have collaborated with my office.



With Art of the Possible Partners from the public, private and third sector





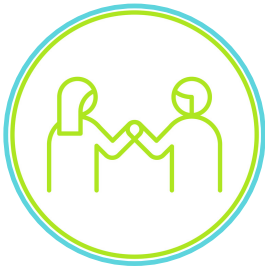
## Involvement

In addition to my ongoing involvement with people throughout Wales, I have undertaken additional activities to produce this report. My approach is set out in more detail in Annexe 1. I have engaged with and taken on board the views of over 5,000 people. This includes:

- Meetings of my statutory Advisory Panel
- Regional stakeholder events
- Contacts from members of the public and their representatives
- My new People's Platform – an online tool for people to tell me their stories
- Conversations with businesses
- My first round of statutory monitoring and assessing engaging all public bodies covered by the Act
- The wide involvement of hundreds of organisations through my Art of the Possible Programme which underpins the advice to public bodies in Chapter 3
- Working through networks such as the Wales Council for Voluntary Action and One Voice Wales to reach community and voluntary groups
- The many experts and stakeholders that have commented on drafts and helped with the ideas and recommendations contained in Chapter 5

It is important to acknowledge the tremendous input and contribution that has informed my views and those of my team, and made this report possible.





## Disclaimer

I have taken a proportionate approach to information gathering (asking public bodies, key stakeholders and individual and group contributors for evidence and views on the same or similar issues often around the same time) in my involvement of public bodies and people - mindful of the need to ensure fairness in representation, but also the need for expedition, brevity in the right places, and costs efficiency. Any and all views which are just that – perceptions, views or feedback – are described as such. Other specific or evidence-based (quantitative or qualitative) data or commentary has also been flagged accordingly. Many types of information I have obtained is somewhere between the two. I have endeavoured to give all of these inputs due recognition, appropriate identification and prominence in the report. I always welcome feedback on the approach.



# How to use this report

This is a significant report which has to be produced by each Future Generations Commissioner once every five years (four years for myself as the first Commissioner).

Given the remit of the Act, the Commissioner's role and statutory reporting duties, the report is large. It has been broken down into key sections to make it more user friendly. Alongside the report, there will be a range of other products and interactive tools produced in the months following publication.

Throughout the report, I have sought to inspire, encourage and be clear about what needs to change. Reaching the aspirations of the Act requires us to change both what we do - the policy - and how we do it - the process - (or put another way, the machinery of Government and our public sector bodies).

Throughout the report you will find the following sections directed towards:

- Welsh Government – recognising the particular leadership role they have
- All public bodies and boards covered by the Act (including Welsh Government)

## Recommendations

These are 'what' Government and other public bodies should do in terms of their policies and approaches. They are what I consider to be the most significant things that should be done in the next five years to help us reach the well-being goals. There are specific recommendations directed towards Welsh Government in each chapter and others directed towards public bodies.

The recommendations directed towards public bodies in each chapter are mostly taken from my 'Art of the Possible' Programme and the 'Journeys' to each of the goals. This guidance was published in 2019 and contains practical examples and steps in areas public bodies should focus on in meeting the well-being goals.

## Stop/Start

These relate to 'how' public bodies should do things. They largely focus on the five ways of working, the process for our decision making, for implementing policy and delivering services, and how the machinery of the public sector works.

## Advice on setting well-being objectives

I am required in this report to provide advice to public bodies (for the first time) on the setting and meeting of well-being objectives. Public bodies are required to take this advice into account when next setting or revising their well-being objectives. This advice applies to all public bodies covered by the Act including Welsh Government.

## Big Ideas

Throughout this report you will find Big Ideas of how we could do things differently. They are taken from some of the best examples from Wales and across the world, and many have been fed in by the people of Wales. They aim to inspire public bodies, the voluntary sector, businesses and communities to try new things.

Some of these ideas are also the things we would want political parties to embrace in their manifestos for the next Assembly or local government elections, and over the coming years. I will be working to inspire politicians to adopt the most progressive of policies to secure the best future for Wales.



# How to use this report

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Given the scale and coverage of the Well-being of Future Generations Act this report is huge. It has been designed to give you as much or as little information as you want and to be accessible to a range of readers. This report has been designed to be read electronically and interactively online. This is hosted on a special website.

We also created PDF format versions of the site so that the report could be formally laid before the Assembly.

We have a variety of accessible versions of this report available.

We have designed this report to be interactive, where you see:



## Listen to audio

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If you see this button, there is a piece of audio you can listen to. Click the icon to hear it.

Online, the information is structured into 3 levels of detail:

- A short word summary
- An executive summary
- And if you need to see the full text of the Chapter or of this whole report, then click 'More Information'.

On the right-hand side of the screen, you can also find a menu of the PDF versions of sections, chapters, the whole report or its executive summary. You can choose how much detail you want to see.



## Play a video

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If you see this button, there is a video you can play. Click the icon to play it.

If you need any more assistance, or if you want to give us feedback, please contact the team on:

**[contactus@futuregenerations.wales](mailto:contactus@futuregenerations.wales)**



# Our Design and Presentation



At the beginning of each chapter you will see a version of this map, that highlights the elements relating to the chapter you are about to read.

This map is a vision of the future of Wales, and each part of this report is referenced within this picture.



## Structure of this report

The report is structured into 7 chapters:

Chapter 1 'Tomorrow' provides information about global context for our national vision for the future and of the importance of well-being.

Chapter 2 looks at culture change within public bodies and the use of the statutory ways of working.

Chapter 3 looks at progress against the seven well-being goals.

Chapter 4 sets out a series of actions public bodies and Public Services Boards can take when setting their well-being objectives and steps.

Chapter 5 looks in more detail at my areas of focus (the areas I consider to be my own well-being objectives).

Chapter 6 looks at my actions to help us reach the vision and 'what next' in taking this report forward, and how I can continue to work with other sectors to advocate for and deliver the Wales we want.

Chapter 7 looks at my plans taking the report forward

Each Chapter or section follows a similar format:

- Bringing to life the vision set out in the Act through the lens of each topic. It draws on international examples and shows the connections with all of the goals.
- What people have told me. These are their views and might not be the truth or reality but I believe it is important to give a voice to everyone following the involvement principle.
- The opportunities and challenges relevant to each topic, setting first what future generations need and then assessing where we are on our journey to meet well-being objectives and goals and including my keys findings.
- My recommendations on what to do or stop doing to bridge the gap between the present and the future we want to achieve for Wales.

**Enjoy the read and do not hesitate to share your thoughts #FGReport2020**



@FutureGenCymru



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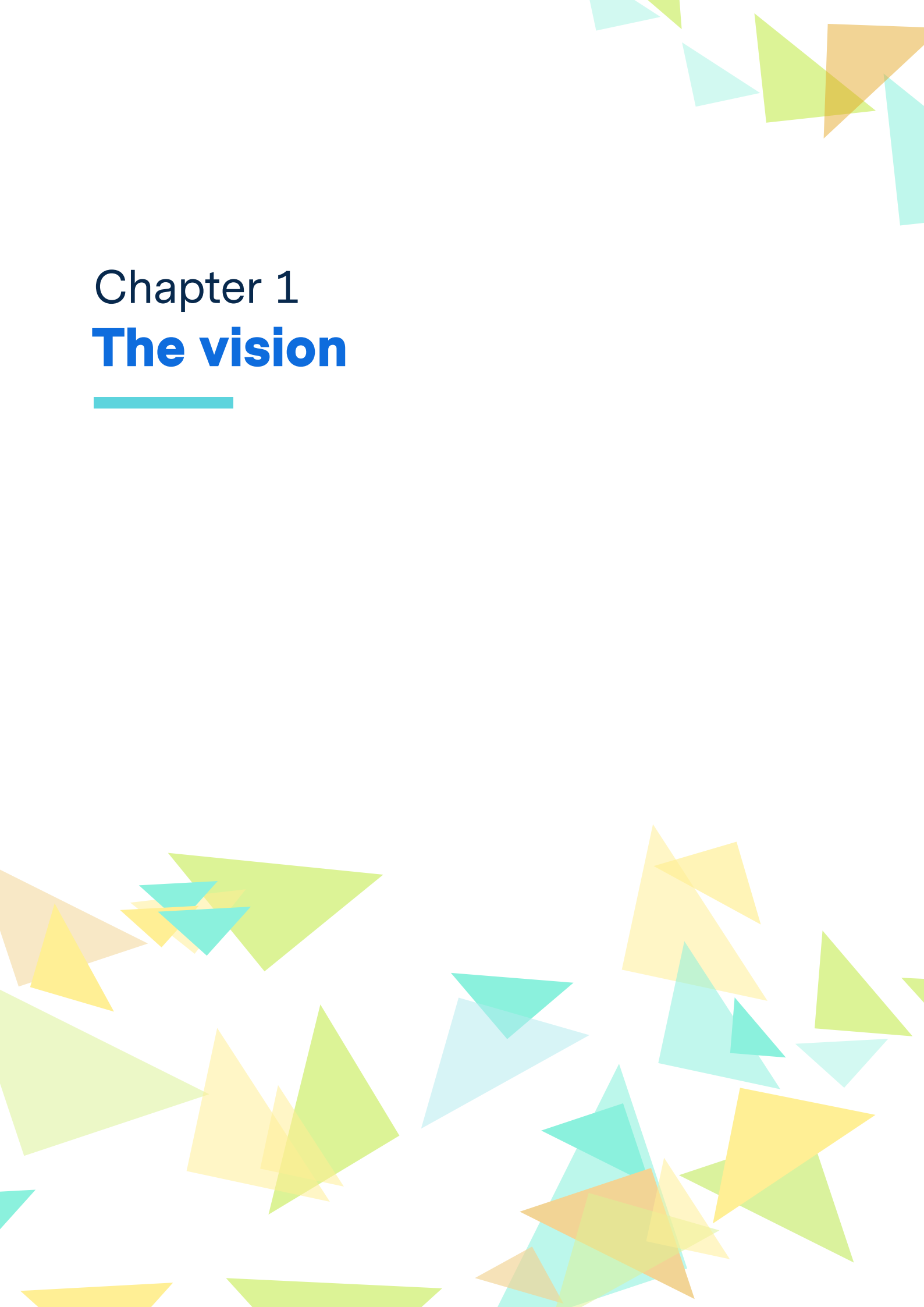




# Chapter 1

## **The vision**

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**“Cowardice asks, ‘Is it safe?’  
Expediency asks, ‘Is it politic?’  
Vanity asks, ‘Is it popular?’  
But, conscience asks, ‘Is it right?’**

**There comes a time when one must  
take a position because one’s  
conscience tells one that it is right.”**

 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.



## Why does well-being matter?

The '2010's will surely be remembered as the decade of global disruption. And if the first few months of 2020 are anything to go by, living in a fast-changing, uncertain world looks sure to become our new reality. Throughout the 2010s, the shackles of the status quo began to loosen, with events like the EU referendum, alongside advances in technology, a global climate emergency, record migration levels and an unstable global economy, posing uneasy questions for politicians and public alike.

Questions about the future have filtered into all aspects of our daily lives, forcing us to constantly re-evaluate and question what lies ahead. From automation, artificial intelligence, the fourth wave of the industrial revolution, the climate and nature emergencies, flooding, the outbreak of COVID-19, it is clear that these issues are not just for our scientists or philosophers to debate. These pose real dilemmas for those working in policymaking and public services. These questions are unavoidable. It has become harder to look away, to dismiss, to shelve these issues as someone else's problem.

Whether it's from public pressure or the reality of a rapidly changing environment, many politicians are awake to the fact that we need to take action today for a better tomorrow.

**'What Wales is doing today, we hope the world will do tomorrow.'**

United Nations



Many countries are looking to improve the lives of future generations and are exploring the ideas of Ombudsmen, Commissions and well-being budgets. However, Wales remains the only country currently who have legislated for the rights of future generations.

Whilst Wales was bold in taking that first step, we still have many emergencies to face. We need to ensure we are preventing problems while seizing all the opportunities our changing world presents us with.

While Wales remains the only country to impose duties to carry out sustainable development, it has inherited some of the highest rates of inter-generational poverty, childhood obesity and inequalities throughout the whole of the UK.

The Well-being of Future Generations Act provides an opportunity to change that – and to leave behind a legacy we are proud of. It was the passing of the Act in 2015, that led the United Nations to say, 'what Wales is doing today, we hope the world will do tomorrow', recognising the ways in which Wales's legislative framework complements international initiatives like the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.



## Wales now needs to demonstrate how this world leading legal framework is driving profound and real change on the ground.

Wales went further than the traditional international definitions of sustainable development, taking it beyond environmental concerns. The use of the term ‘well-being’ in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, complements the well-being concept in the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

The meaning of ‘well-being’ in the Social Services Act is defined in relation to a ‘person’ and linked to individual health; based on subjective perception of our own well-being. By contrast, in the Well-being of Future Generations Act, ‘well-being’ refers to the state of our population, society and our environment across Wales overall. It looks to ensure that people have the economic, social, environmental and cultural conditions around them to be well.

Crucially, all four dimensions of well-being (sometimes referred to as pillars), are equally important. The economy cannot be prioritised at the expense of the environment or society, for example. Wales is also one of the first countries in the world to recognise the importance of cultural well-being to our lives and to the fabric of our society.



## The challenges ahead

What does it mean to plan for future generations? The future can look dark, but it does not have to be.

**“When politicians fail to look beyond the next election – or even the latest tweet – they are neglecting the rights of future generations.”**

Roman Krznicaric

25 years might sound like a long time, but when you realise 25 years ago was only 1995, you realise how hard it is to plan 25 years ahead.

In 1995, we were watching the first Toy Story movie, Windows 95 was launched, eBay first started, the DVD was first announced, and we were all learning to dance to the Macarena.

Yet in 2020, technologies such as automation and artificial intelligence are already part of our day-to-day lives, from Siri on your iPhone, Alexa in your kitchen, and Google Translate, to the more ambitious forms of self-driving cars or surgeries performed by robots.

Futures thinking might sound like something that falls between astrology and analysing probabilities, but it is an essential practice if we are to meet the challenges facing our future generations. Thinking generations ahead is the norm for some cultures. The Iroquois, for example, are urged to live and work for the benefit of seven generations into the future (approximately a 140-year time span).

It is essential we are aware of the challenges ahead, to prevent sleepwalking into a future no one would want.



## Wales and the world: the global context

As the impacts of COVID-19 continues to demonstrate, Wales is part of a global community and is susceptible to trends experienced across the rest of the World.

Some of these changes will have more of an effect on Wales than others. On the next few pages, I've set out the 'trends to watch', the areas which could have the biggest impact on the well-being of our future generations.

**“In our every deliberation, we must consider the impact of our decisions on the next seven generations.”**

From the Great Law of the Iroquois Confederacy



© South African cartoonist Jerm



## Declining natural world, climate change and resource scarcity:

- In 2018, the [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change](#) warned us we had 12 years to save the planet, by keeping the level of global warming to a maximum of 1.5°C. It is now 2020 and we only have 10 years left.
- The [climate is already warming \(1°C warmer than pre-industrial levels\)](#), with many of the impacts such as warming of the lower atmosphere; acidification of our seas; rising sea levels and declining glaciers and sea ice, already being detected.
- Rising temperatures are also expected to have direct consequences for human health. The average number of [heat-related deaths in the UK is expected to more than triple to 7000 a year, by the 2050s](#).
- It is projected that a 21-year-old graduate on an average income will [lose £82,000 of income during their lifetime](#), with their children expected to lose almost three times that, due to the economic burden of climate change.
- On a global level, climate change coupled with economic growth spurred by emerging markets, will lead to increasing constraints on the availability of water. The world risks a [‘Global Sahara’ scenario, where the concept of water as a ‘renewable’ resource](#) will become a thing of the past.
- The [Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services](#) found that nature is declining globally at rates unprecedented in human history and that the rate of species extinctions is accelerating.
- In the UK, there has been a [13% decline in species’ abundance on average, since 1970](#), with 15% of species threatened with extinction, making the UK ‘amongst the most nature-depleted countries in the world’.
- The effects of climate change on biodiversity and the natural world globally [will lead to a catastrophic decline of populations of many species](#) and a complete loss of some ecosystems, such as coral.
- Around £456 million of UK public sector funding was spent on biodiversity in the UK in 2017-18. The funding has decreased by almost a third in the last 5 years. However, the amount the UK spends on international biodiversity conservation has more than doubled over the same time period, and spending by NGOs on biodiversity and conservation has also increased by around a quarter, [reaching £239 million in 2017/18](#).

See Chapters 3 and 5 for more information and recommendations.



## What could this mean for Wales?

Doing nothing on climate change will have consequences for all of us. It can be difficult to imagine what that might look like for Wales, but the unprecedented flooding we saw in February 2020 may give an indication of what's to come. We might also expect to see:

- [Poorer air quality](#), if we and others around the world don't reduce emissions. [Poor outdoor air quality is already linked to between 28,000 and 50,000 deaths each year in the UK](#) with children, the elderly, or those with existing medical conditions most at risk.
- Hotter and drier summers, with risks of fires and droughts affecting human health, crops and livestock, and wetter winters, with increased frequency and severity of storms and flooding. Under a medium emissions scenario, Wales is expected to have 14% more rainfall in winter and 17% less rainfall in summer by 2050.

- Rising sea levels, putting our coastal cities at risk of flooding unless money is spent on defences and climate adaptation. Sea levels have risen by 16cm since 1900, and will continue to rise for centuries due to time lags in the [climate system](#).

Wales currently uses up to two and a half planets worth of resources, with current trajectories showing this will be up to three planet's worth by 2050. If we continue to live beyond the means of our natural world, we pose serious risks to the well-being of our people and planet.

The good news is that the amount of waste produced in Wales going to [landfill has been declining since 2004](#). The bad news is that we have already seen a 60% decline in [global biodiversity in the last 50 years](#). Unless we continue to take action, future generations may never know a world with orangutans or black rhinos – or, closer to home, be able to spot hedgehogs, butterflies or songbirds in the Welsh countryside.

See the sections on A Resilient Wales (Chapter 3) and Decarbonisation (Chapters 2 and 5) for more information and recommendations.



## Evolving population and demographic changes

- The global population is expected to reach 8 billion by 2030. By 2028, the Office of National Statistics has predicted that the UK will be home to an extra 3 million people, with the total population passing 70 million people by mid 2031. In this time, England's population will have grown the most, by around 5%, [while the population of Wales will have grown the least, by 0.6%](#)
- Welsh Government's [Future Trends report](#) predicts that 3.25 million people will live in Wales by 2036 – an increase over 10 years of around 140,000 people. Most of this increase will be due to people moving to Wales from other countries (67%) or from the UK (29%), with only 3% of the change due to birth and death rates.
- The biggest change in Wales' population will be the [increase in the number of older people](#). By 2041 there will be nearly a quarter of a million (223,924) more people over 65, while the number of people aged over 80 is expected to increase by more than a quarter in the 10 years from 2016, and by over 80% in 25 years.
- Countries are becoming increasingly urbanised. Every week, 1.5 million people [move to cities and towns globally](#). In the UK, it is projected that over 92% of the UK population will [live in cities by 2030](#). Although most people in Wales live in towns and cities, it also has a large rural population with around 1 in 3 people living in areas classed as rural, compared to only [1 in 5 people in England](#).
- The number of households in Wales is projected to grow faster than the population between 2016 and 2039, with more people wanting to live alone or in smaller family groups. To meet this increased demand for homes, Welsh Government predict Wales will need an average of 8,300 new homes every year until 2023 and then 4,000 a year until the mid 2030s. Cardiff is expected to have the largest number of households and to have seen [the biggest increase in number, by 2024](#).





## What does this mean for Wales?

How Wales' population changes over the coming years will be very dependent on migration, and by extension, the factors that may affect people's decisions to move to or leave Wales, such as Brexit or job availability. This could particularly affect the number of working age adults in the Welsh population, which is currently predicted to [fall by nearly 5% by 2041](#).

- Overall, the population of Wales is set to get older. Although people are living longer, they are not necessarily living in good health: at 65, most people in Wales can expect to spend just over half their remaining life in good health, and by 2025 there could be [50,000 people in this age group living with dementia](#).

It is already the case that the cost of acute care in Wales increases with the age of the patient, from less than £400/yr for under 40s, to between £1,000 to £2,500/yr for people in their 60s and 70s, and up to £3,500 for those over 85. It is also important that, as a society, we are making the most of the value older people can bring to local communities and wider society.

See in particular the sections on [A Healthier Wales](#) and [A Wales of Cohesive Communities](#) in Chapter 3.

## Poverty and inequality

- There are growing inequalities between regions in the world, both within countries and between rich and poor people in each country. [The world's richest 1% own more than half of the world's wealth](#), and if current trends continue, they are on track to control over [two-thirds of global wealth by 2030](#).
- In Wales, around a quarter (24%) of people live in poverty, among the [highest levels in the UK](#). This includes over 200,000 children, or around [1 in 3 of the total](#). Wales was the only UK nation to see a rise in child poverty when it was [last assessed in 2017-18](#).
- More than half of people who live in poverty in the UK, including 7 in 10 children, are in a working family; an increase of 17% in the last 20 years. This is because people's pay, their hours, or sometimes both, are not enough to make ends meet. In Wales, more than 1 in 4 workers earned less than the [real Living Wage in 2017-18](#).
- Three of the top 10 most unequal local authorities in the UK in terms of well-being [are in Wales](#). Blaenau Gwent is the most unequal, with Neath Port Talbot and Merthyr Tydfil coming third and fourth.



## What does this mean for Wales?

Nearly 1 in 4 people in Wales live in poverty, including around a third of all children. It's often the poorest and most vulnerable in society that suffer the most, and we can already see the impact of this when we look at health outcomes. While life expectancy in Wales has increased overall, those in the richest areas are expected to live up to nine years longer overall and nearly 18 years longer, in better health, [than those in the poorest areas](#).

From being exposed to the highest levels of air pollution, to being at greatest risk of job losses due to automation, current trends indicate that the gap in well-being between rich and poor is at risk of widening in the future.

The decisions we make around infrastructure investments, welfare and support systems, and the location, pay and type of work available in Wales, will have a significant impact on how this trend plays out over the coming years.

See in particular the sections in Chapter 3 - A Healthier Wales, A More Equal Wales, A Prosperous Wales; and Chapter 5 - Housing, Skills and Transport.

## Technological change

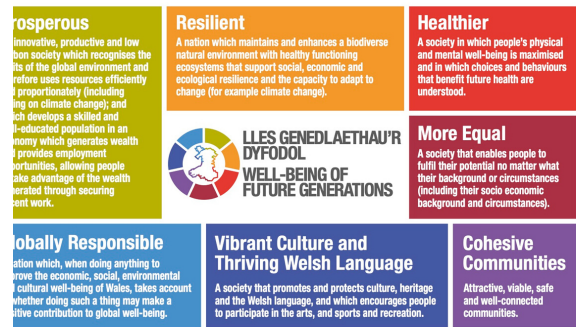
Technological change is one of the main disruptive factors for the future. These trends and questions are considered in detail in the Skills section of Chapter 5.



# The Wales we want in 2050

The whole Future Generations Report will detail this vision set out in the well-being goals and this section gives a glimpse of what Wales could be like if we achieved such goals.

- Our businesses, public services, voluntary sector and government have worked together to achieve the goals of the Well-being of Future Generations Act and Wales is a zero-carbon country.
- We have replaced our traditional health system with a holistic wellness service. We still have hospitals, A&E and centres for treatment of accidents and disease, but the major focus is on prevention and keeping people well.
- We have more access to green space and feel more connected to the environment, with people feeling empowered to improve their own health and well-being.
- Technology has helped to keep people healthier for longer and advancement in genomics helps us predict and prevent illnesses before they occur.
- Housing in Wales is a basic human right. Our homes are energy-efficient, with more generous space standards and adaptable interior structures, and are resilient to climate change.
- Technology is integrated throughout our homes, making our lives easier, especially for those with additional support needs. Our overall health and well-being is improved because of this better housing, and our communities are more vibrant and cohesive.



- Culture, the arts, and recreational sport are a part of all of our every-day lives; helping to enrich us and keep us well. The Welsh language is thriving, with over 1 million people in Wales speaking Welsh daily.
- Our planning system allows for green space, renewable energy generation and water management, allowing our natural habitats to thrive. Biodiversity in Wales is flourishing, and everyone has access to green space.
- Through a place-making approach, planning is no longer seen as something that stops at the border with another local authority, and the system is integrated.
- In terms of our waste, we have moved from a model of use and disposal to one where we reduce, repurpose, recover and regenerate in new ways to create new products.



# The Wales we want in 2050

- Tackling adverse childhood experiences is deeply embedded in the culture of Welsh public services and the number of children living with adverse childhood experiences is extremely low. The system helps the person and no longer simply deals with a specific issue.
- The population of Wales enjoy quality jobs that are future-proofed for the global economy; lifting people out of poverty and enabling them to reach their potential.
- Digital connectivity, particularly in rural communities, has helped people reduce the need to travel, improving work-life balance and has enabled people to readily access the universal, basic services and lifelong learning opportunities they need that support everyday life, regardless of where they live. There will be strong community and cultural networks.
- Our salaries are no longer seen as a measure of our value. Schools teach us skills for life, and we spend more time outside, being creative and learning transferrable skills.
- Technology frees up more time for us to do the things we enjoy and employers value life-long learning. People are empowered by a sense of purpose to do the things that matter to them and there is equality of access to all careers.
- Our transport system is integrated, flexible and multi-modal. It is fully accessible and affordable, whilst being zero-carbon. We spend less of our time commuting to work and we are able to spend more time with our families or doing the things we enjoy.



## Where next?

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**Fortunately, the future is not fixed. The actions we take, or don't take, today, make a difference to the future we see tomorrow.**

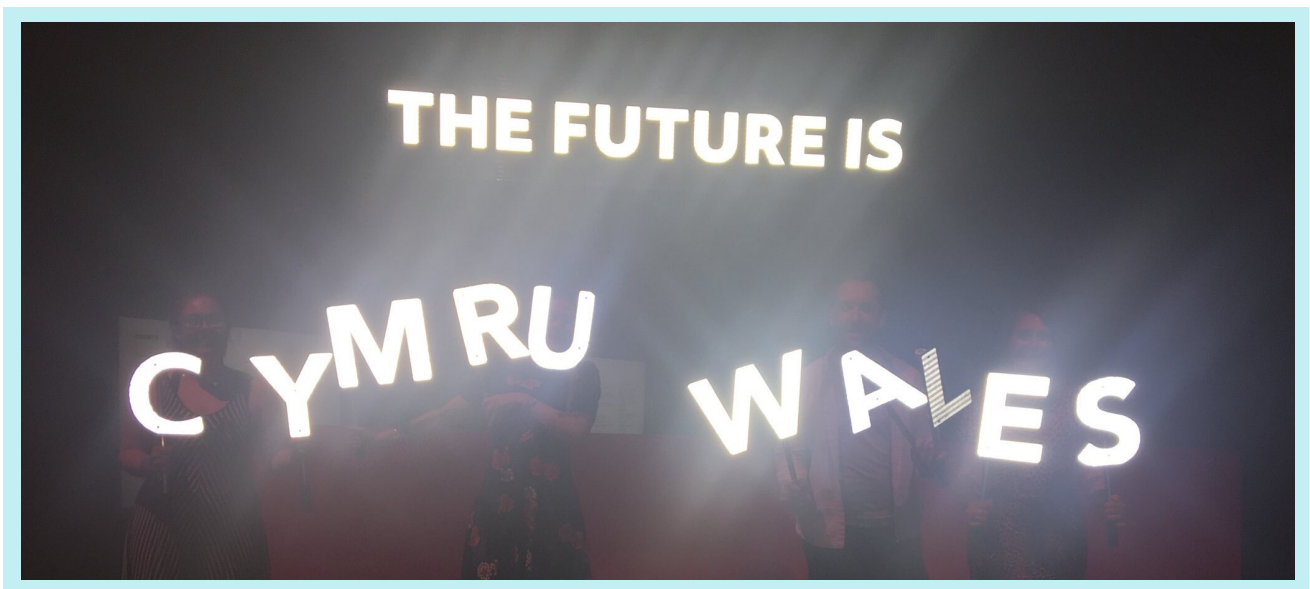
While there are a lot of unknowns, uncertainties and unforeseeable surprises just around the corner, there are also a lot of opportunities, new ideas, passion and a vision. We can take Wales towards the future we want.

I am encouraged to see the many ways public bodies, businesses, the third sector and communities are already taking action to take us towards the Wales We Want. Across Wales. Across the World.

By taking bold decisions and actions now we can ensure that our children and our children's children have a happy, healthy and secure future ahead of them. This is our national vision for Wales in 2050.

Each chapter of this report provides details of what this common statutory vision entails as well as providing advice on how we should be getting there.

**This report seeks to provide the inspiration, ideas and recommendations to help us all meet this vision and create the Wales we want for current and future generations.**





Comisiynydd  
**Cenedlaethau'r  
Dyfodol**  
Cymru

**Future  
Generations**  
Commissioner  
for Wales

