



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

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Welsh Government
Consultation – summary of response

Shaping Wales' Future: Using National Indicators and Milestones to measure our Nation's progress

Proposals for setting the first wave of national milestones for Wales and seeking views on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the national indicators

December 2021

Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.

This document is also available in Welsh.

Overview

The purpose of this consultation was to seek views on setting national milestones for Wales that will assist Ministers in assessing progress towards achieving the seven well-being goals as set out in the Act. The consultation also asked whether any revisions needed to be made to the existing national indicators following the experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Action Required

This document is for information only.

Further information and related documents

Large print, Braille and alternative language versions of this document are available on request.

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Additional copies

This summary of response and copies of all the consultation documentation are published in electronic form only and can be accessed on the Welsh Government's website.

Link to the consultation documentation: [Shaping Wales' Future](#)

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Introduction

The seven well-being goals for Wales contained within the Well-being of Future Generations Wales Act 2015 (the Act) provide a description of an economically, socially and environmentally just Wales. As a government we are committed to making our contribution to these goals, and in ensuring the well-being of future generations' framework continues to drive better decision making for current and future generations.

The Act includes three measures that help provide a shared understanding of our country. The national indicators which measure progress, the national milestones that indicate the scale and pace of change, and the future trends report that sets out the factors that may affect progress towards achievement of the well-being goals, combined, these three mechanisms will help shape Wales' future.

The purpose of this consultation was to seek views on setting national milestones for Wales that will assist Ministers in assessing progress towards achieving the seven well-being goals as set out in the Act. The consultation also asked whether any revisions needed to be made to the existing national indicators following the experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Consultation period

As required by the Act, the Welsh Government proactively engaged with the specified public bodies, the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales ("the FGC") and wider stakeholders.

Public consultation

The consultation ran from 1 September 2021 to 26 October 2021. The consultation paper was issued electronically to a wide range of stakeholders and was also made available on the Welsh Government website. A consultation letter to Public Body Chief Executives (or equivalent) was issued by the Minister for Social Justice inviting their views on the proposed national milestone values and changes to the national indicators.

A range of engagement was undertaken during the consultation period including Welsh Government officials undertaking and attending:

- Public webinars
- Public Service Board Co-ordinators network meeting
- Children's Rights Advisory Group
- A session with a panel of young people, facilitated by Young Wales
- Welsh Statistical Liaison Committee
- Well-being of Future Generations Stakeholder Fora

Detail of responses

In total 94 responses were received, this included:

- 52 submitted by e-mail;
- 42 submitted via the online form;

The Welsh Government commissioned Wavehill Ltd to independently analyse the responses received. Their comprehensive report is being published alongside this document.

Table 1 provides a breakdown of respondents. Respondents were assigned a category as part of the consultation analysis. A full list of organisational respondents is available as part of the independent consultation analysis report.

Table 1 – Profile of consultation respondents

| Sector | Number of responses |
|--|----------------------------|
| Public Sector | 28 |
| <i>Local Authority</i> | 13 |
| <i>Welsh Government Sponsored Public Bodies (WGSPBs)</i> | 6 |
| <i>Health Boards</i> | 6 |
| <i>Other public sector</i> | 2 |
| <i>Partnership board</i> | 1 |
| Third Sector | 31 |
| <i>Charity or not for profit</i> | 19 |
| <i>Membership organisation</i> | 12 |
| Other | 35 |
| <i>Individual</i> | 23 |
| <i>Public appointment</i> | 4 |
| <i>Higher Education</i> | 1 |
| <i>Trade Union</i> | 2 |
| <i>Elected officer</i> | 0 |
| <i>Political party</i> | 0 |
| <i>Not known</i> | 5 |
| Total | 94 |

We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who responded to the consultation and those who attended the webinars, meetings and events for their contributions.

Next steps

Having considered the responses to the consultation the next phase of the work will be to:

- Refine and lay the first national milestones for Wales and revised national indicators.
- Determine the detail of how new national indicators will be measured.

- Provide the first update on the new indicators and progress towards the national milestones in the Well-being of Wales report in 2022.
- Take forward the work on the second wave of national milestones in 2022.

Format of the Government response

This document provides the Welsh Government response to the consultation, based on the independent analysis carried out by Wavehill Ltd and other feedback. The purpose of this document is not to respond to every individual suggestion made.

The document is organised into two sections:

Section 1: Response to the proposed values for national milestones

Section 2: Response to the proposed changes to the national indicator set

Section 1 - National milestones

The consultation asked for views on nine proposed national milestone values. This section summarises the Welsh Government's response to the comments received.

We were very pleased to find the independent analysis report clearly indicates there was "overwhelming support for the substantive focus of every national indicator and national milestone contained within the proposals.

Universally, each national indicator and national milestone were positively received by respondents. This suggests there exists broad consensus on the importance of the issues outlined within the proposals, and the priorities that they seek to advance."

We have, however, refined some of the national milestones based on the responses received as outlined below.

Qualifications

Overall, there was overwhelming support for the substantive focus and intention of the two proposed national milestones on qualifications. 92.4% of respondents answering this question agreed with the overall approach.

A number of responses highlighted the importance of addressing inequalities surrounding qualifications and the Welsh Government will continue to explore with stakeholders what support can be made available to remove barriers to education and training.

Some respondents also highlighted the importance of setting a more ambitious target on qualifications. Achieving 75% of working age adults in Wales qualified to level 3 is our baseline ambition but the Welsh Government will continue to work with stakeholders to consider whether an even more stretching milestone target could be set.

Education, Employment and training

There was overwhelming support for the inclusion of this national milestone. 94% of those who responded were in agreement with the proposals.

The Welsh Government will continue to consider how this work is progressed with a focus on reducing inequality and ensuring the maximum benefit is provided to young people moving through education, training and into employment. This includes linking to targets within the Welsh Government's upcoming Employability Strategy as well as aligning to the Young Person's Guarantee which is at the core of our efforts to support young people in the labour market. The Welsh Government is also refreshing and relaunching the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework to help reduce the number of young people at risk of not engaging with education, employment or training.

Employment

The suggested milestone on employment was widely supported and 89.4% of respondents answered that they agreed with the proposed approach.

Further to suggestions by respondents and ongoing work with stakeholders the Welsh Government has added a specific reference to 'fair work'. The Welsh Government is committed to progressing fair work as a fundamental priority.

The Welsh Government's new Employability Strategy will be published in the spring and will set out actions to accelerate progress with reference to this and the other labour market national milestones. The strategy will focus on tackling structural inequalities; progression pathways for young people in the labour market and progress our fair work ambitions.

Pay Equality

Support for the intention and focus of this national milestone was very high with 95.4% of responses in agreement with the overall approach.

Setting this ambition as the national milestone provides consistency in our approach and complements the aspirations set out in the Welsh Government's fair work and equality strategies and task forces including: Fair Work Wales, the Gender Equality Action Plan, Disability Rights Taskforce the Race Equality Action Plan and the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy.

Healthy Lifestyle Behaviours

Perceptions of the proposed national milestone were positive with 90 percent of respondents to the question reporting that they agreed with the overall approach.

An important theme raised by respondents was that the national milestone (and national indicators 3 and 5) were negatively phrased. It was suggested that a more

positive wording would aid clarity of the milestone (and indicators) making them easier to interpret, as well as reinforcing a healthy lifestyle message.

The Welsh Government has considered this and decided to change the national milestone value to reflect this – To increase the percentage of children with two or more healthy behaviours to 94% by 2035 and more than 99% by 2050. The wording for the associated national indicators for both adults and children will also be amended.

Global Footprint

There was a high level of support for the indicator and the milestone put forward, with 87.9% of respondents providing a positive response.

As part of the Welsh Government's vision of a sustainable Wales by 2050 and as part of our continuing response to the climate and nature emergency we want to see Wales using only its fair share of the earth's resources.

The Welsh Government is currently exploring suitable methods with partners for updating the footprint in 2022.

Net Zero Emissions

83% of respondents indicated that they were in support of this national milestone.

In March 2021 the Senedd formally committed Wales to achieving net-zero emissions by 2050. The net zero target reflects the most recent advice of our expert advisors, the Climate Change Committee, which has been explicitly designed to reflect Wales's 'highest possible ambition' within our particular capabilities – as set out in the Paris Agreement.

Setting this national milestone aligns with the legislative target set out in the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. Should the conditions be met for the legislative target for net zero in Wales to change, the milestone set here would mirror that change.

Welsh Language

There was widespread support (80%) for this national milestone among the respondents to the consultation.

The Cymraeg 2050 target of a million Welsh speakers by 2050 is already embedded in the work of the Welsh Government and its partners and it will remain a priority for us.

The Welsh Government considers the census to be the authoritative source for the number of Welsh speakers in Wales, and this is how we will continue to measure progress against our ambition of having one million Welsh speakers. 2021 Census data will be available in 2022 which will help map our path to a million Welsh speakers.

Section 2 - National indicators

This section is organised into three parts:

1. Response to proposals on mode of travel, minimum digital living standard and amending national indicator 33 (percentage of dwellings with adequate energy performance).
2. Response to suggestions for other changes in the national indicator set – proposals which will be implemented.
3. Response to suggestions for other changes in the national indicator set – proposals which will not be implemented.

1. Response to proposals on mode of travel, minimum digital living standard and amending national indicator 33 (percentage of dwellings with adequate energy performance).

The consultation asked for views on three specific proposed changes to the national indicators. This section summarises the Welsh Government's response on these topics.

Mode of travel

In all, 82% of respondents to the question on mode of travel were in broad agreement about its inclusion as a new national indicator.

The Welsh Government has considered this response and will implement a new national indicator on the percentage of journeys by walking, cycling or public transport.

This new indicator will capture public transport as part of the measure, reflecting the high public interest in this topic.

Minimum digital living standard

There was overwhelming support for the inclusion of an indicator relating to a minimum digital living standard with 85% of respondents to the question in agreement.

The Welsh Government has considered this response and will implement a new national indicator on the status of digital inclusion which will be developed alongside the development of a minimum digital living standard.

This new indicator will capture concepts such as connectivity speed, device access and digital skills, all of which were key themes raised in the consultation.

Energy performance of dwellings

There was broad support for amending the measure for national indicator 33 – percentage of dwellings with adequate energy performance, with 70% of consultees who responded to the question in agreement.

The Welsh Government has considered this response and is committing to update the measure alongside work planned in 2022 on the Welsh Housing Quality Standard to identify a measure which recognises factors such as energy efficiency and environmental impact rating.

2. Response to suggestions for other changes in the national indicator set – proposals which will be implemented.

The consultation asked respondents for views on whether the COVID-19 pandemic had highlighted any additional gaps in the way progress is measured towards the seven well-being goals, with around half of respondents offering suggestions.

As a result of responses to the consultation and wider engagement with stakeholders, we will implement two new national indicators and amend one indicator in the current set.

Housing costs

The ability to afford somewhere to live, whether renting or buying, was identified as an important gap in the national indicators that has increased in importance during the pandemic. This was raised by multiple respondents to the consultation and also through wider engagement. Respondents noted the impact housing affordability has not only on individuals but on the cohesiveness of communities and their culture, including the Welsh language.

The Welsh Government will therefore implement a new national indicator on the percentage of households spending 30% or more of their income on housing costs. 30% is a commonly used threshold in relation to housing costs. The addition of this indicator will strengthen coverage of goals for a prosperous Wales, a more equal Wales, a Wales of cohesive communities and a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language.

Justice and community cohesion

Justice has previously been noted as a gap in the national indicator set and was raised this year as an area of importance by a panel of young people. In addition there was broader interest in strengthening coverage of community cohesion, civic engagement and the factors that might affect the connectedness of communities during the pandemic. Beyond the consultation, recommendations from the

Commission on Justice in Wales in 2019 reflected on the importance of improving access to justice in Wales and improving data on justice more generally.

Topics raised by respondents such as influence on local decisions, community safety and perceptions of community cohesion are already reflected in the national indicators, but justice is not, with confidence in the justice system providing an indicator of the cohesiveness and equality of communities in Wales. The Welsh Government will therefore implement a new national indicator on the percentage of people who have confidence in the justice system. The addition of this indicator, related to citizen's confidence in a democratic system, helps strengthen coverage of goals for a more equal Wales, a Wales of cohesive communities and a globally responsible Wales.

Job security

The Welsh Government has previously committed to implementing the recommendations of the Fair Work Commission, including a national indicator on the real Living Wage. As a result we committed to replacing the existing indicator on quality of employment (percentage of people in employment, who are on permanent contracts (or on temporary contracts, and not seeking permanent employment) and who earn more than 2/3 of the UK median wage) with an indicator on the proportion of employees earning at least the real Living Wage.

In responses from this consultation the need to maintain a measure of job security was identified by respondents as having increased in importance during the pandemic.

The Welsh Government will therefore retain the job security element of the original national indicator whilst also implementing the new element on those earning at least the real Living Wage. The indicator will be the percentage of people in employment, who are on permanent contracts (or on temporary contracts, and not seeking permanent employment) and who earn at least the real Living Wage

The addition of this indicator will maintain coverage of goals for a prosperous Wales, a healthier Wales, a more equal Wales and a globally responsible Wales.

3. Response to suggestions for other changes in the national indicator set – proposals which will not be implemented.

This section provides a response to the more common suggestions for new indicators where we have decided not to implement a change. A large number of suggestions were made and we have not sought to respond to each new indicator proposed.

Additional health indicators

We recognise the importance and breadth of fully capturing aspects of public health. However a number of the suggestions received for health indicators did not fit the criteria for a national indicator, for example they were not outcome-focused or they reflected the performance of a single organisation. It was felt that the balance of the current health indicators within the national indicator set was sufficient. Currently 31 of the 50 indicators are linked to the goal for a healthier Wales.

Mental well-being indicators

Whilst mental well-being has increased in importance during the pandemic, it was felt that this is already captured in a number of national indicators, including the mean mental well-being score and percentage of people who are lonely. The annual Wellbeing of Wales report will continue to report on additional contextual information on mental well-being, alongside this national indicator.

Access to the outdoors

This is recognised as an area that has increased in importance during the pandemic but is already captured as part of indicator 24 on access to facilities and services. The annual Wellbeing of Wales report will continue to report on access to green space, alongside the national indicators.

Children and young people

Increasing the visibility of children and young people was identified as both a potential new indicator and of importance in the breakdown of existing indicators by respondents. There are already national indicators that specifically capture experiences of children and young people and there are no plans to add additional indicators on this topic. However, we agree with the importance of more fully capturing children and young people in the national indicator set and are committed to considering how the existing indicators can be broken down to ensure that the well-being of children and young people are captured.