



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

REPORT

# Welsh Government Annual Report 2023

The 2023 report sets out the progress that we have made towards delivering our well-being objectives.

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# Foreword

I am proud to publish the second annual report of this Senedd term. It outlines the progress we have made in delivering our priorities, as set out in our Programme for Government and the steps we continue to take to meet our well-being objectives.

We continue to deliver in the most difficult of times. The last year has been another challenging one – marked by a deepening cost-of-living and cost-of-energy crisis, the brutal war in Ukraine and increasing evidence of the climate and nature emergencies. Our public services are recovering from the impact of the pandemic as we have thankfully moved beyond the emergency response.

We have worked hard – with our partners – to deliver on our promises. We have achieved a great deal, while also delivering targeted support to help people with the cost-of-living crisis and a super-sponsor scheme with wrap-around support for people fleeing the war in Ukraine.

It is important we recognise the resilience and hard work across the Welsh Government, public and third sectors, which has made this possible. I also want to pay tribute to everyone in Wales who has opened their homes to people from Ukraine, providing a place of safety and security – this truly shows we are a Nation of Sanctuary.

We have been guided by the principles and ways of working embedded in the Well-being of Future Generations Act in our work, even as we have had to make tough decisions because of the huge pressures on our budgets, driven by the UK government's mismanagement of public finances and the fall-out from the disastrous mini-budget in September 2022.

All our budgets have been refocused towards delivering our priorities and on improving the lives of the people of Wales, wherever they live and whatever their

circumstances.

Our Co-operation Agreement with Plaid Cymru is also in its 2nd year. It continues to deliver on its ambitious programme and I look forward to the publication of the second annual Co-operation Agreement report in December, which will highlight the progress this partnership continues to make.



Mark Drakeford MS  
First Minister of Wales

# Introduction

This is the second annual report of this Senedd term, setting out the progress we have made towards our well-being objectives under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

A number of the commitments, which contribute to the delivery of our well-being objectives are included in the Co-operation Agreement between the Welsh Government and Plaid Cymru. The second Co-operation Agreement annual report will be published in December 2023.

## How this report is structured

The report is structured around our 10 well-being objectives. The main body of the report highlights key achievements and actions taken towards meeting them. The accompanying annex sets out progress towards the full range of Cabinet commitments detailed under these objectives in the Programme for Government.

The 10 well-being objectives are:

- Provide effective, high quality and sustainable healthcare.
- Protect, re-build and develop our services for vulnerable people.
- Build an economy based on the principles of fair work, sustainability and the industries and services of the future.
- Build a stronger, greener economy as we make maximum progress towards decarbonisation.
- Embed our response to the climate and nature emergency in everything we do.
- Continue our long-term programme of education reform, and ensure educational inequalities narrow and standards rise.

- Celebrate diversity and move to eliminate inequality in all of its forms.
- Push towards a million Welsh speakers, and enable our tourism, sports and arts industries to thrive.
- Make our cities, towns and villages even better places in which to live and work.
- Lead Wales in a national civic conversation about our constitutional future, and give our country the strongest possible presence on the world stage.

## 1. Provide effective, high quality and sustainable healthcare

We are proud of our NHS – the first universal health service of its kind in the world, which celebrates its 75th anniversary this year.

Thanks to the ongoing dedication and hard work of its staff, who looked after us all during the pandemic, we have been able to move beyond the emergency Covid response and provide more healthcare and NHS services.

We have committed more than £1 billion in additional funding over the course of this Senedd term to help the NHS recover and cut waiting times.

The impact of the pandemic on our health and care services has been profound, particularly on the number of people waiting for planned treatment. The NHS is making good progress on reducing the backlog that built up during the pandemic and reducing long waiting times. The latest (April 2023) waiting times data showed 96% of pathways on waiting lists for treatment were under 2 years, compared to 90% in April 2022. We have also seen a reduction of 43% in waits over 1 year for first outpatient appointments and 2-year waits have reduced by 54% but have not yet been eliminated.

We have reformed contracts with dentists, community pharmacies and GPs.

Almost 174,000 new patients have gained access to NHS dental care over the last year and more than 1.3 million courses of treatment have been delivered. Approximately 600,000 consultations have been delivered in community pharmacies, increasing capacity in GP surgeries. The new contract with GPs is the most significant reform in 20 years and includes a 4.5% pay uplift for GPs and support staff and reduces the administrative burden on GPs so they have more time to spend with patients. There is also a focus on mandatory access standards, to make it easier for people to get an appointment.

We have invested £5m to increase the number of community-based Allied Healthcare Professionals, such as physiotherapists and occupational therapists, to help develop a wider, skilled workforce in the community. This will help prevent the need for people with complex conditions to be admitted to hospital for care and reduce the need for long-term social care.

We are also digitally transforming the way our health and social care services work. The NHS Wales app is being tested with the public. Almost 100,000 people can access their summary health records, order repeat prescriptions and book, view and cancel certain appointments through the new app.

We have lowered the screening age for bowel cancer testing to 55, providing potentially life-saving screening to an additional 172,000 people across Wales. Treatment for and diagnosis of cancer and suspected rare diseases will benefit from our plan for a Genomic Centre for Wales which will sequence up to 3,000 whole genomes annually to improve diagnosis for cancer and rare disease. We will also offer 5,000 extensive genomic testing profiles annually to patients with newly diagnosed cancer to improve outcomes.

In 2022-23, we allocated an extra £50 million to support mental health services, including increased capacity in child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), perinatal mental health and eating disorder services. To help improve access to support, we have created the new 111 press 2 for mental health service, which will help to improve access to urgent mental health advice

and support.

In March 2023, we published our HIV Action Plan for Wales, which will help us deliver our commitment to zero transmissions by 2030 and reduce the stigma experienced by those living with HIV.

## 2. Protect, re-build and develop our services for vulnerable people

Protecting and supporting the most vulnerable people in society is at the heart of our work. This has been particularly important during this cost-of-living crisis as so many people have experienced hardship.

Many of us rely on social care to look after ourselves, our families or friends and our goal is to create an integrated, preventative and person-centred care system for Wales. The independent National Care Service Expert Group's final report was published in September providing recommendations about how to create a National Care Service. In May 2023, we launched a consultation on [Rebalancing Care and Support](#).

We are proud to have delivered the Real Living Wage to care workers – an important step in our ongoing work to recruit to and retain this valued workforce. We continue to encourage the take up of apprenticeships in the health and social care profession and we have offered additional funding to bring more Welsh speakers into these important roles.

We have also continued to deliver tailored housing to people with social care needs, through the [Housing with Care Fund](#). In 2022-23, we invested in 64 schemes, including 14 supported living schemes for adults with a learning disability, 12 older people's schemes and 6 supported accommodation schemes for adults and families with mental health and other care needs. A further 19



children's residential schemes and 5 emergency, respite or transitional accommodation schemes for children and young people were supported.

We have committed to explore the radical reform of care services for children and young people. We held our first summit on the reform of the care system in December, which put young people with experience of care at the heart of this important process. As a result, the First Minister and young ambassadors signed a joint declaration setting out a vision for transformed services for care experienced children and young people. To support the delivery of the declaration, we published our **Corporate Parenting Charter** in June 2023.

Care leavers face some of the biggest barriers – financial and societal – as they move into adulthood. This is why we launched a **Basic Income Pilot for care leavers** in July 2022. As of January, the pilot had a 92% take up rate among its target group. This pilot will test the impact a basic income makes but also builds on other support we have provided for care leavers, including exempting them from paying council tax.

We believe there should be no place for profit-making in children's services. We have therefore made £68 million available over 3 years to develop suitable alternative provision that is sustainable, locally accountable and close to home. We have consulted on the legislative changes needed to support this ambition and are working closely with local authorities, which will manage this transition.

In September 2022, we expanded the **Childcare Offer** to parents of 3 and 4-year-olds in education and training, making an estimated 3,000 families eligible for funded childcare. Since its launch, 438 families have accessed funded childcare.

We have expanded access to all 4 elements of the early years **Flying Start programme**, benefitting over 3,100 children and we have provided £46 million to support the expansion of Flying Start childcare.

We have also provided £70 million to make improvements and undertake essential maintenance of childcare settings and £3.8m to support more childcare providers to improve their Welsh-language provision.

In partnership with the NHS and third sector partners we have set up a new **bereavement pathway**, to provide immediate help to families coping with the loss of a child.

### **3. Build an economy based on the principles of fair work, sustainability and the industries and services of the future**

We have continued to invest in our priorities of upskilling the Welsh workforce, creating high-quality jobs closer to home and growing the industries of the future – all are increasingly important in an uncertain and volatile global economy. These are the building blocks of a fairer, more productive and secure long-term economy.

Our Economic Mission is clear – we want a more prosperous economy, which requires a focus on resilience. This is why we are expanding the compound semiconductor cluster around Newport. We continue to promote this sector internationally, including at global events and meetings with investors, such as the Minister for Economy's recent visit to California's Silicon Valley.

In May 2022, we agreed with the UK government to establish a **Freeport Programme in Wales** and in March 2023, we jointly agreed to progress bids from the Celtic Freeport, covering Milford Haven and Port Talbot and the Porthladd Rhydd Ynys Môn/Anglesey Freeport in North Wales to the next stage. Both proposed Welsh freeports would have a strong focus on renewable energy and low carbon technology and be committed to promoting fair work and

prioritising environmental sustainability.

The industries of the future will rely on a strong foundation of fair work with businesses, unions and employees working together for the benefit of all. This is the founding principle of our social partnership model. Our **Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act** was passed into law in May 2023, putting social partnership on a statutory footing and paving the way for a permanent Social Partnership Council for Wales, bringing together government, employers, and worker representatives.

We have delivered on the Fair Work Commission's recommendations and published our progress.

This includes actions to promote the Real Living Wage, improve access to trade unions and the experience of work in specific sectors, for example through the Social Care Fair Work Forum and Retail Forum.

We are delighted more than 500 organisations in Wales are Real Living Wage-accredited.

The pandemic and the UK's exit from the EU highlighted the importance of safeguarding Wales' Foundational Economy. We have continued the Backing Local Firms Fund to help Welsh SMEs do business with the public sector for a 2nd year.

We believe in building a skilled and engaged workforce of the future. Our flagship Young Person's Guarantee is helping young people under 25 secure a better future. Since it launched in November 2021, we have supported more than 20,000 young people; 11,000 have started on employability programmes. We have also continued to work with further education colleges by setting up Enhanced Employment and Enterprise Bureaus to help young people prepare for employment.

In September, we published our strengthened Youth Engagement and Progression Framework to operate alongside and complement the Young Person's Guarantee. It is designed to identify those who need support to succeed. We have continued to promote the importance of apprenticeships and have delivered more than 28,000 all-age apprenticeship starts since May 2021, with an extra £36 million committed over the next 2 years.

As part of our commitment to moving Wales to a new low carbon future, we published our Net Zero Skills Action Plan in February 2023, setting out the role skills will play, as part of a just transition.

To help deliver this, our Personal Learning Accounts programme will have a particular focus on green sector skills.

A strong and varied economy requires international collaboration and trade to succeed. We were delighted that Welsh goods exports surpassed the value of their pre-pandemic levels this year at £20.5 billion in 2022. To ensure this trend continues, we invested £4 million in a comprehensive programme of export support for Welsh businesses.

## **4. Build a stronger, greener economy as we make maximum progress towards decarbonisation**

We are committed to ensuring Wales makes a just transition to a modern, decarbonised economy.

The ongoing volatility of the global energy market, which has caused energy prices to spike in 2022-23, underlines the importance of prioritising a resilient and efficient domestic energy model. We are investing in renewable energy infrastructure, including on and offshore wind and solar.

We are exploring new opportunities for broadening and diversifying our approach, including looking at new uses for disused coal mines and taking advantage of the natural geological heating processes to create clean energy. We have presented evidence to the Independent Commission on the Constitutional Future of Wales about the case for devolution of powers in this area, particularly the devolution of management of the Crown Estate to support our Marine energy priorities.

In October 2022, we announced plans to set up a publicly owned renewable energy developer, which will see profits reinvested into communities.

In November, we released our Energy Generation in Wales: 2021 report, a key milestone for our 2030 ambitions. We are proud Wales now generates the equivalent of 55% of its electricity consumption from renewable sources.

In March 2023, we announced the launch of the Tidal Lagoon Challenge for research proposals to support Wales becoming a global centre for emerging tidal technologies.

We have provided access to gigabit broadband for nearly 37,000 premises across Wales as part of our full fibre broadband project and are progressing ambitious proposals, which will see all new homes built in Wales include a 1GBPS connection.

15% of our carbon emissions in Wales come from transport. We cannot continue on the same trajectory and expect to reach net zero. We are transforming the way we think about transport and our National Transport Delivery Plan published in February has a focus on encouraging healthier, more sustainable, and more accessible travel for all.

To support this our Active Travel Fund has delivered £46 million of infrastructure including improvements to the A55 in Gwynedd and phase 2 of Cardiff's Cycleway 1, successfully combining city centre walking, cycling and biodiversity

enhancements.

The independent Roads Review panel completed its work to review our road building pipeline.

Our response to its recommendations has resulted in a globally recognised new approach to road building, setting clear purposes and conditions for construction which will progress modal shift and decarbonisation. This does not mean an end to road building, but it does require a higher bar is met, taking account of our climate and economic responsibilities.

Public transport is key to our ambitions. We are progressing our plans to take public control of the bus system through a franchised network, which will allow us to put people before profits and start the process of decarbonising the national bus fleet.

To increase capacity across the rail network we are investing £800 million on rail rolling stock to operate across Wales. The first of Transport for Wales' brand-new fleet of trains, built in Wales by leading manufacturer CAF, was officially launched on the Conwy Valley line at the end of 2022.

Farmers play a vital role in producing our food and addressing the impacts of the climate and nature emergency. We are ahead of schedule in distributing the Basic Payments Scheme (BPS) and we announced we will be moving to a new Sustainable Farming Scheme, which will diversify rural economy payments to encourage greater protection and enhancement for our environment, alongside stability for farmers to continue the sustainable production of food. We have worked with farming communities and stakeholders to co-design the new scheme.

Our historic Agriculture (Wales) Bill was introduced to the Senedd in September 2022 and successfully completed Stage 3 in May 2023 – it puts sustainable land management and the protection of nature at the heart of the Welsh countryside

economy.

## **5. Embed our response to the climate and nature emergency in everything we do**

Reducing plastic is crucial to our efforts to reduce our carbon footprint and reach net zero. In June 2023, our landmark Environmental Protection (Single-use Plastic Products) (Wales) Act became law. This will ban or restrict the sale of some of the most commonly littered single-use plastics in Wales, with decision making powers in the hands of local authorities.

We have made significant advances in reducing waste and creating a circular economy. Wales continued to outperform the rest of the UK on household recycling and is one of the best in the World with a municipal recycling rate of 65.2%, saving around 400,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> from being released into the atmosphere.

We also funded Repair Café Wales to extend the repair café network to 81 communities across Wales and enabled Benthg Cymru to expand the number of 'Libraries of Things' to 18.

As part of our co-ordinated approach to tackling the climate and nature emergency we introduced the Environment (Air Quality and Soundscapes) (Wales) Bill in March 2023, a key step in bringing forward measures to improve air and noise quality and reduce the impacts on human health, the natural environment and our economy.

We recognise the importance of biodiversity for a healthy and productive ecosystem, publishing our Biodiversity Deep Dive in October 2022. This included our aim to enhance and expand our protected sites on land and sea to achieve the 30% biodiversity coverage by 2030, as per UN

recommendations.

We presented our ambitions for biodiversity on the world stage at COP15 in Montreal.

We have ambitious plans to create a National Forest protecting existing ancient woodland and linking them together with ambitious new tree planting.

In November, in partnership with Coed Cadw we offered a free tree to every household in Wales through the My Tree Our Forest initiative, with 300,000 trees planted. Following the successful 2020 pilot, in April 2023 we launched the Coetiroedd Bach/Tiny Forest Grant providing funding for up to 100 more tiny forests.

We want farmers to be central to our tree planting plans, to support them in September we launched the Small Grants Woodland Creation Scheme and the Woodland Creation Grant supported with £32 million of funding.

We have invested £15 million in our Nature Networks programme, to protect Wales' diverse natural habitats, from saltmarshes and estuaries to forests and grasslands. Our Local Places for Nature programme continued to bring communities together to improve local environments across Wales, including 348 new green spaces, 261 pollinator sites, 132 orchards, 189 community food growing sites and 23 therapeutic gardens. The land surrounding our strategic road network provides important green corridors and this year we planted more than 8,000 native trees and shrubs, 12,000 metres of hedgerows and sowed 3.5 hectares of land with wildflower seeds to benefit the wildlife and improve the attractiveness of these routes.

In August, we concluded the consultation on our Coal Tip Safety (Wales) White paper – this is a significant step towards ensuring people living and working in the shadow of coal tips feel safe and providing a modern legislative framework for managing disused tips.



We continue to uphold our policy of opposing the extraction of fossil fuels in Wales. No new coal licenses have been issued this year and, of the 14 petroleum licences inherited from UK government, only 5 remain. One more licence is in the process of being surrendered this year.

In January, the Net Zero Challenge Group commenced work examining the potential social justice implications and other impacts of accelerated decarbonisation pathways to 2035.

## **6. Continue our long-term programme of education reform, and ensure educational inequalities narrow and standards rise**

In September 2022, we introduced the Curriculum for Wales, co-designed with teachers and educators, empowering schools to tailor their own curriculums to support each individual learner's progression and wellbeing. It has already been successfully rolled out to non-maintained settings, primary schools and nearly half of the secondary schools in Wales.

We remain committed to reforming the school day and school year. We are exploring how the composition of terms and distribution of school holidays can help tackle disadvantage, support wellbeing and benefit learners, school staff and parents.

In response to the Covid 19 pandemic, our Recruit, Recover and Raise Standards (RRRS) funding programme, has resulted in more than 2,400 full time equivalent additional staff being appointed – far exceeding our target of 1,800.

We have taken proactive steps to attract more people to the teaching profession, including introducing a new payment structure which will see eligible student teachers being paid more after their first term rather than at the end of their

induction period.

Our Ethnic Minority Incentive Scheme has provided up to £5,000 to eligible individuals to ensure the education workforce reflects Wales' diverse population. Additional funding has also been made available for secondary school teachers in certain subject areas and those studying to teach through Welsh.

In response to the cost-of-living crisis, in April 2023 Wales became the first UK nation to increase the Education Maintenance Allowance payment from £30 per week to £40.

To help ensure no child in Wales goes hungry, we launched universal free school meals for all primary school pupils in September, starting with pupils in reception classes and expanding to years 1 and 2 in April 2023.

More than 5m extra meals have been served. We also made over £41 million available between April 2022 and May 2023 to extend holiday food provision for pupils traditionally eligible for free school meals.

In 2022, an estimated 300,000 children attended programmes funded through the Summer of fun, supporting families across Wales with the rising cost-of-living over the summer months. In addition, more than 8,000 children took part in this year's school holiday enrichment programme, Food and Fun, on each day of the scheme during the summer school holidays, providing healthy meals, food and nutrition education, physical activity and enrichment sessions.

In March 2023, we announced £40 million to create community focused schools in all parts of Wales. We are also providing parental and community outreach programmes, such as nutrition and skills classes and parent and child reading sessions.

We want the buildings our children and young people learn in to be welcoming spaces but not impact on the environment. In March 2023, we provided £60m to

make schools and colleges more energy efficient and £44.7 million in capital funding to build three net zero schools following the Sustainable Schools Challenge.

In September, the Tertiary Education and Research (Wales) Act 2022 received Royal Assent establishing the Commission for Tertiary Education and Research which will be operational in 2024.

We are championing an innovative approach to tackling the challenges we face as a country.

Our Innovation Strategy, published in February 2023, takes a “mission-driven” approach to climate and nature, health and wellbeing, education and the economy. It aims to drive up investment from within the UK and beyond and in April, we signed a memorandum of understanding with the UK’s Innovation Agency – the first such partnership agreement with a devolved government.

## **7. Celebrate diversity and move to eliminate inequality in all of its forms**

As part of our ambitious commitment to eliminate inequality in all its forms, we published our Anti-racist Wales Action Plan in June 2022 which was co-produced with people from Black Asian and Minority Ethnic communities and have made early progress against many of its actions. For example, in October, we launched the Diversity and Anti-racist Professional Learning Project (DARPL) to support the new Curriculum for Wales, making high-quality, free learning available to all education professionals.

Our national and local museums, galleries, libraries, theatres, and sporting venues need to be inclusive of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people and reflect their history and contribution to Welsh society. In November, to improve

representation and deliver the culture and heritage goals in the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan we provided over £4.5m to our arm's length bodies and 22 independently run organisations, including the National Library of Wales, Tŷ Pawb in Wrexham and Butetown Arts and Culture Association in Cardiff.

To continue our commitment to support victims of domestic violence, we published our Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence: blueprint high-level action plan in March 2023 setting out our ambitions to address workplace and gender-based harassment in all public spaces. Our National Advisers published their annual plan with its nine objectives to tackle all forms of abuse against women and girls.

Furthering our aim to become the most LGBTQ+ friendly nation in Europe, we published our LGBTQ+ Action Plan for Wales in February 2023 bringing together a set of realistic goals towards a society where the inclusion and celebration of LGBTQ+ people is at its heart. In April 2023, we met with the United Nations and its Independent Expert on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity. It recognised the LGBTQ+ Action Plan for Wales as “an example of good practice in human rights policymaking”.

The Disabled People's Employment Champions continue to work closely with the Disabled People's Employment Advisors in Business Wales, providing advice and support to clients. Almost 120 businesses have now made the Disability Confident commitment.

Work has continued to ensure our public transport is more accessible to disabled people with improvements made to our bus services by introducing new vehicles. These include the latest technology in accessible audio-visual stop announcements and information on next rail departures as the bus approaches the station.

In February 2023 we published our Period Proud Wales Action plan furthering our ambitions to achieve period dignity and eradicate period poverty in Wales.

During 2022-23 the Period Dignity Grant, available to all schools, supported 270 secondary and special schools and over 940 primary schools to provide period products to learners. In addition, we provided funding to over 790 community-based organisations to make period products available across communities.

The cost-of-living crisis continues to impact people across Wales. In 2022-23, 350,000 claims for emergency and urgent help were awarded through the Discretionary Assistance Fund totalling over £38 million. Continued investment in the Single Advice Fund over the same period, helped nearly 84,000 people deal with over 390,000 social welfare problems supporting them to claim £49 million in income they were entitled to and getting debts totalling £10 million written off. Through the winter of 2022 the Welsh Government Fuel Support Scheme supported over 340,000 low-income households by providing a £200 cash payment to help them pay their energy bills.

## **8. Push forward towards a million Welsh speakers, and enable our tourism, sports and arts industries to thrive**

We continue to work towards our goal of a million Welsh speakers by 2050 and have developed, funded and promoted a range of Welsh language programmes over the last 12 months.

In March 2023, we published a white paper setting out proposals for a Welsh Language Education Bill. This will enable all pupils to become confident Welsh speakers through the statutory education system by 2050.

In May 2022, we published our 10-year Welsh in Education Workforce Plan setting out actions to increase the number of teachers able to teach Welsh and

other subjects through the medium of Welsh.

We have made free Welsh lessons available to 16 to 25-year-olds and teaching staff and in December we invested £6.6 million to support Welsh language immersion projects.

Our Welsh Language Communities Housing Plan sets out some of the tools and actions to support Welsh-speaking communities which have a high density of second homes. To help the Welsh language to thrive, we supported 21 community co-operative projects and provided a specialist advice and support service which has helped establish 10 new social enterprises.

In August 2022, we set up a commission for Welsh-speaking Communities which will look at how a range of factors are affecting our Welsh language communities. It published its preliminary report in June 2023.

We concluded the consultation about proposals to introduce a discretionary Visitor Levy for Wales and published the findings alongside the consumer research report in March 2023. These will help to inform the development of legislative proposals.

The levy would enable local authorities to raise money through a small charge paid by people staying overnight in accommodation, which would then be re-invested in local areas.

We understand how important it is for people to be able to discuss their healthcare needs in the language they feel most confident. In August 2022 we published a new plan to boost the use of Welsh in health and social care More than Just Words, which places a responsibility on the provider to offer services in Welsh.

In line with our commitment to improve access and participation in culture, we have invested a further £5.4 million to create a new Football Museum for Wales

in Wrexham. We have also made good progress in developing a National Contemporary Art Gallery for Wales.

Equality of access was the central theme of the Sports Summit, which we jointly hosted with Sport Wales in December. More than 200 delegates attended from across the sport and leisure sector to discuss the challenges and opportunities for shaping an inclusive sport system based on the lived experiences of under-served communities.

In September we introduced a new Creative Skills Action Plan to help develop the existing and next generation of talent in television and film, digital content, and music. It is backed by the Creative Skills Fund, which has supported 17 high-quality skills and training projects in the sector. In June 2022, we established an expert panel on a Shadow Broadcasting and Communications Authority for Wales to look at the options for a broadcasting and communications framework that better meets Wales' needs.

## **9. Make our cities, towns and villages even better places in which to live and work**

We recognise that everyone deserves a safe and affordable home – this has never been more important for many of us during the cost-of-living crisis. As part of our long-term ambition to end homelessness, we have continued to increase social housing this year, with over 2,500 homes delivered in the social sector. We established the Transitional Accommodations Capital Programme and provided £76.4m to bring forward almost 1,000 good-quality longer-term homes for people in housing need including people experiencing homelessness and those being resettled from Syria, Afghanistan and Ukraine.

Long-term empty properties are a wasted housing resource and can become a blight on our communities. The national empty homes scheme will see up to

2,000 long-term empty properties brought back into use over the next 2 years.

We are committed to improving rental conditions and we have introduced the Renting Homes (Wales) Act to replace various, complex pieces of legislation with one clear legal framework, providing contract-holders in Wales with greater security of tenure than in any other part of the UK. The Act ensures rental properties are fit for human habitation; places strengthened duties on landlords to ensure smoke and carbon monoxide alarms are installed and regular electrical safety testing is carried out.

In the face of double-digit inflation – we capped social rent increases at 6.5% and have ensured there will be no evictions due to financial hardship for the term of rent settlements in 2023-24.

In July, we introduced a landmark and radical package of measures to address high numbers of second homes, including making changes to planning regulations to introduce three new planning use classes – primary home, secondary home and short-term holiday accommodation. Alongside changes to the national planning policy this will give local authorities the ability to control the number of second homes and holiday lets in any community in Wales.

Using taxation, we have given local authorities the discretionary power to charge up to 300% council tax on secondary homes and long-term empty properties and we have changed the rules on non-domestic rates for short-term holiday lets. A holiday let must now be available for rent for at least 252 days a year and be actually let for at least 182 days in any 12-month period to be listed for non-domestic rates, otherwise it is liable for council tax.

We have been working hard on a whole-building approach to building safety – to repair defects and reform standards. All developers we expected to sign our legally binding Welsh Developers document have done so. It commits them to remediate the buildings they have developed which are 11 metres and over in height and which have identified fire safety issues.



We have committed to funding and carrying out remediation work on a group of 28 so-called “orphan buildings” – these are privately-owned buildings where a developer is unknown or has ceased trading. And we opened a Leaseholder Support Scheme, to help those people who are experiencing significant financial hardship because of potential or identified fire safety issues in their building.

Aligning with our goal to make Welsh cities, towns and villages even better places to live and work in, we introduced legislation in July 2022 to lower the default national speed limit on residential roads and busy pedestrian streets from 30mph to 20mph. This makes Wales the first UK nation to make the move, helping to save lives, develop safer communities, improve quality of life, and encourage more people to make more sustainable and active travel choices.

## **10. Lead Wales in a national civic conversation about our constitutional future, and give our country the strongest possible presence on the world stage**

The Independent Commission on the Constitutional Future of Wales, co-chaired by Professor Laura McAllister and Dr Rowan Williams, published its interim findings in December 2022. It concluded the status quo is no longer working and proposed options for fundamental constitutional reform. The Commission is continuing to engage with the public and civic society; a final report is due at the end of 2023.

We are preparing legislation to take forward the recommendations of the Special Purpose Committee on Senedd Reform. In doing so, we are also reflecting the conclusions reached by the Senedd Business Committee in its report published in December.

We have taken forward work in a number of areas, including a requirement for candidates and Members of the Senedd to be resident in Wales, and provision for a review of the operation of the new legislative provisions following the 2026 election.

This is taking place in conjunction with our wider work on Electoral Administration and Reform.

In October 2022, we published a consultation on detailed proposals for the modernisation of electoral administration in Wales. Working with local authorities, we intend to pilot the automatic registration of electors and improve the accessibility of devolved elections for disabled voters.

The benefits of a more progressive council tax system are well-documented, and we continued with our work to reduce wealth inequalities across Wales. We consulted on a broad – and initial – set of proposals to make council tax fairer and more progressive and published the responses in December. We continue to support around 270,000 people to pay their council tax bills by maintaining entitlements to reductions.

We are proud Wales is a Nation of Sanctuary and have been overwhelmed by the support people have provided in opening their homes to people fleeing the war and violence in Ukraine. Our SuperSponsor scheme continued to provide wrap-around support to over a thousand people from Ukraine. Wales has also provided sanctuary to people from many other parts of the world including those leaving Hong Kong, Afghanistan and Syria. We gave £100,000 to the Disasters Emergency Committee to support the emergency aid and rapid relief effort following the severe flooding in Pakistan and a further £300,000 towards their appeal after devastating earthquakes in Turkey and Syria in February 2023.

Following the UK's exit from the EU, Taith, Wales' innovative international exchange programme launched in 2022, providing funding to enable education staff and learners to spend time abroad as part of their studies. In 2022, more

than £11.5m was provided to 74 projects, supporting more than 6,500 staff and learners.

We were delighted to see Welsh Government-funded initiatives promoted and celebrated at football's FIFA Men's World Cup in Qatar earlier this year to promote Wales, project our values of inclusivity and diversity, and secure a positive and lasting legacy from our participation at the tournament. Our World Cup Partner Support Fund saw investment shared among 19 projects in Wales to inspire the next generation of children to participate in sport and drive the health and wellbeing of our nation.

## Review of Well-being Objectives

The updated Programme for Government published in December 2021 sets out our 10 well-being objectives which we believe are the areas where we can make the greatest contribution towards the 7 well-being goals.

In line with the sustainable development principle, they focus on the key enablers, which allow people and communities to prosper and thrive, now and in the future, as well as ensuring we preserve and restore Wales' natural environment and resources for future generations.

We have reviewed our well-being objectives set in 2021 and have concluded that even in the current challenging context they continue to represent the areas where we can maximise our contribution to the well-being goals.

Our well-being objectives and the corresponding steps are collectively owned by Cabinet.

Each well-being objective contributes to all, or a number of the well-being goals. They should be viewed as a closely aligned and mutually reinforcing set that

maximise the impact we can make with the powers devolved to us under the Government of Wales Act 2006. A significant number of steps will also contribute to multiple well-being objectives and their outcomes. The well-being objectives and steps will be kept under review.

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