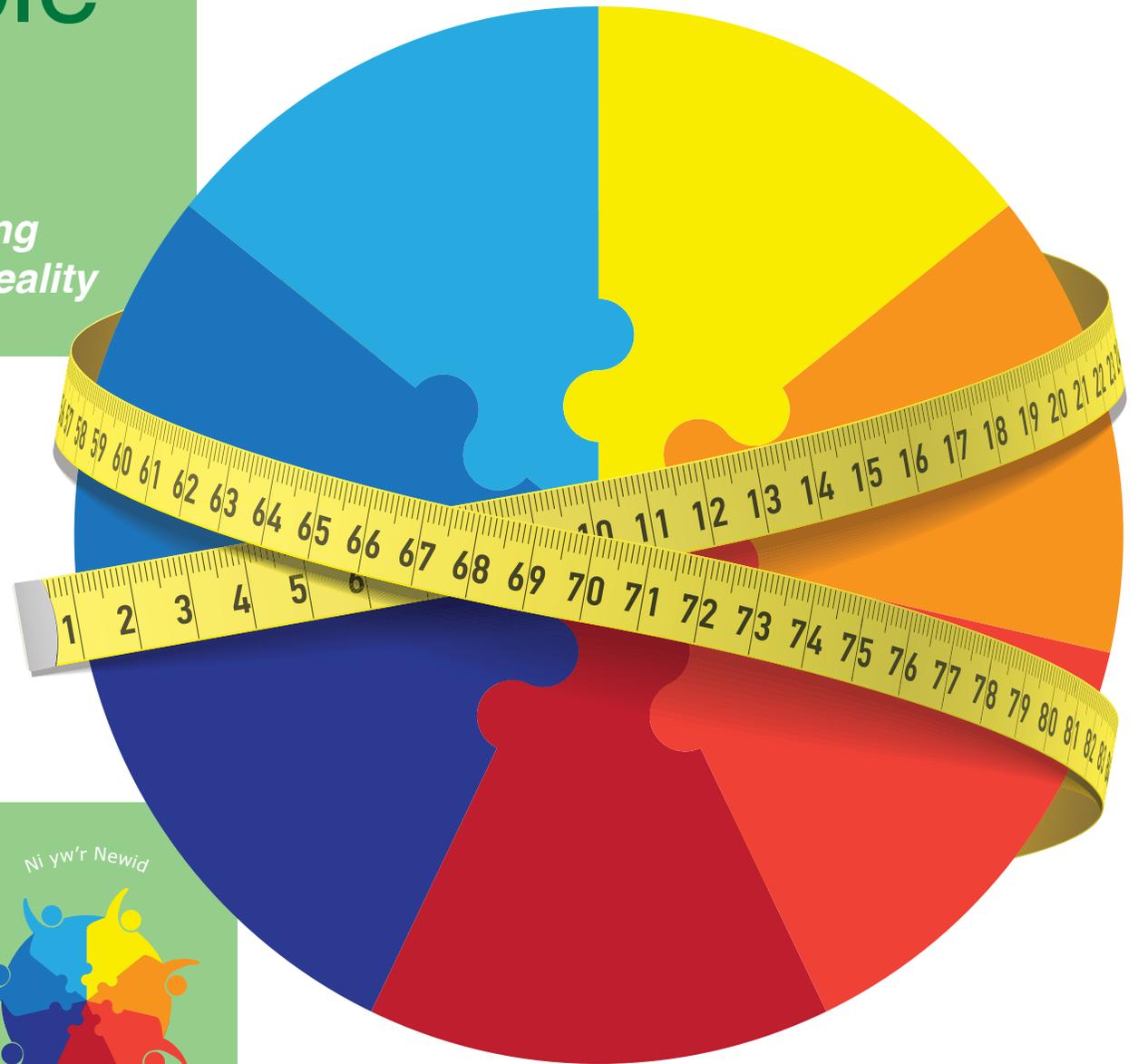


# The Sustainable Steps Series

*Helping our staff to make the Well-being of Future Generations Act a positive reality*



## Reducing our Waste Measurements

*“...by going low-carb(on)”*

Each and every one of us in Public Health Wales has a part to play in making the Well-being of Future Generations Act a reality, and in *‘being the change’* for the Wales we want for our current and future generations. Our actions today are already impacting on tomorrow; let’s make sure it’s a *positive* impact!



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# Introduction

The [Well-being of Future Generations Act](#) requires Public Health Wales, and 43 other public bodies in Wales, to:

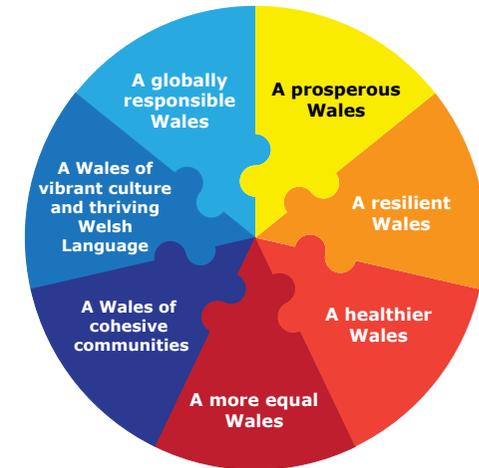
- future-proof decisions
- work better with people, communities and each other
- help tackle and mitigate against problems such as poverty, health inequalities and climate change

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# Contributing to Wales' well-being goals

The Act has introduced seven well-being goals for the outcomes which we want to see in Wales.

Public Health Wales must contribute to achieving all of these goals.



The sustainable steps in this guide for 'reducing our waste measurements' support (at least) four of Wales' well-being goals.



# Sustainable steps

'Reducing our Waste Measurements' highlights some of the practical ways in which we can contribute to the health and well-being of our planet by helping to create a lower carbon (greener) society which uses resources more efficiently.

- ▶ Drink tap water and use a refillable bottle
- ▶ Have a re-useable mug / cup when buying tea / coffee (and think Fairtrade)
- ▶ Use water wisely in the workplace when washing-up and showering; don't rinse items before using the dishwasher
- ▶ Take personal responsibility for switching off non-essential equipment before heading home
- ▶ Reduce stationery purchases and reuse 'scrap' paper as notepaper
- ▶ Shop locally and buy seasonal fruit and vegetables for packed lunches
- ▶ Buy minimally packaged goods, and reuse containers
- ▶ Have a meat-free day for packed lunches and meals at home each week. Become a '[flexitarian](#)'!
- ▶ **Think** before printing e-mails and documents, to save paper, ink and electricity
- ▶ Use digital post-it notes (Windows / All Programs / Accessories / Sticky Notes)
- ▶ Take the stairs instead of the lift; burn calories rather than electricity
- ▶ Recycle paper, plastic, glass, card and aluminium (if you cannot reduce or reuse an item, and where facilities are available)
- ▶ Reduce/remove (single-use) plastic items, including cutlery and bottled water
- ▶ Take care not to over-order on catering for meetings/events, and use food waste bins (where available)
- ▶ Take your own containers to your local Refill shop and buy only what you need with no packaging.
- ▶ Find out about your local [Repair Cafe](#) and [Library of Things](#)

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The use of equipment in the office, including PCs, printers and photocopiers, accounts for around 15% of the electrical energy used in UK workplaces. The effective management of equipment can reduce its energy consumption by up to 70%.<sup>1</sup>

Food waste prevention offers a real opportunity for workplaces to make both environmental and financial savings.<sup>2</sup>

The Welsh Government's 'decarbonisation' work (to tackle climate change) is in response to the Environment (Wales) Act, and includes the Welsh public sector.<sup>3</sup>

The Welsh Government has an ambition for Wales to recycle 70% of all waste by 2025, and be 'zero waste' by 2050.<sup>4</sup>

[1] Carbon Trust - <https://www.carbontrust.com/resources/office-energy-efficiency-guides>

[2] Wrap Cymru - <https://wrap.org.uk/taking-action/citizen-behaviour-change/love-food-hate-waste>

[3] Welsh Government - <https://gov.wales/low-carbon-delivery-plan>

[4] Welsh Government - <https://gov.wales/beyond-recycling-0>

# 'Actors' staff case studies

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## Rhiannon Hobbs

*Senior Public Health Practitioner*

I have always been interested in environmental issues from a young age and have always been thrifty. Following on from my father's footsteps, I find it very difficult to pass a skip and not take a look inside. From bay trees to Victorian tiles, pennant sandstone to bookcases, I've lovingly taken them home to reuse.

So when I saw the amount of waste in No. 2 Capital Quarter and people using the wrong recycling bins, I have taken it upon myself to spread the love of recycling to the rest of my colleagues. At first it was difficult, as busy people were forgetting which bins to use for which item, also some plastic cannot be recycled so this is frustrating for everyone.

My colleagues brought me in a Paw Patrol Rocky™ recycling costume, so I donned Rocky's cape and mask to chat to every table about whether they recycled and could we make a big effort to recycle more or use less plastic.

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At divisional days, our Director has challenged us to use less paper within our work. A quick calculation of the divisional and individual usage was enlightening! I know how hard this is as I prefer a physical document to critique. When I saw my paper usage I was shocked and am doing my best now not to print.

Colleagues certainly do recycle more now since the new recycling bins. There is more to do in challenging the big supermarkets on vegetables being wrapped in plastic; totally unnecessary!

### Angie Kirby

*Project Support Officer*

With fruit and veg, I try to buy local, seasonal produce as there is less of an impact in terms of the way they are grown, (e.g. not in heated greenhouses), and the distances travelled. I also buy in small quantities every few days, rather than doing a big weekly shop, as they perish quickly and I feel terrible if I have to throw food away! I recently met with the charity *Love Food Hate Waste*, which is running some fantastic campaigns to raise awareness around food waste and offering advice on how best to store our food, e.g. freezing a loaf of bread to use for toast.

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It's a simple thing, but the reality is that every day in the UK, 20 million slices of bread are thrown away, which is a shocking figure! – Of course, if we do have to dispose of food, we can compost it so it can be used to grow more food and save energy. Adding it to the general waste is a big no-no as food decomposing in landfill releases methane into the atmosphere, a greenhouse gas responsible for global warming.

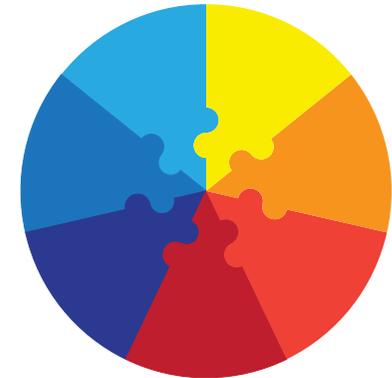
I try my best to conserve water as I was brought up to believe it is a precious resource that should not be wasted. We are incredibly lucky to live somewhere with access to clean drinking water straight from the tap, but keeping that water clean is a carbon heavy process, from the energy required to run the treatment plants to the chemicals involved, it all has an environmental impact.

I really believe we can all make a difference, but we need to make lifestyle changes. Being mindful of the choices we make as consumers and not wasting food, water, fuel and energy are just some of the ways we can contribute on an individual and organisational level.

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## Want to learn more?

This '*be the change*' guide is part of the '*sustainable steps series*', to help staff think about the five ways of working and contribute to Wales' well-being goals.



If you would like further information on active and sustainable travel, including suggesting ideas or asking for advice, please contact the Health and Sustainability Hub:

[publichealth.sustainability@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:publichealth.sustainability@wales.nhs.uk)



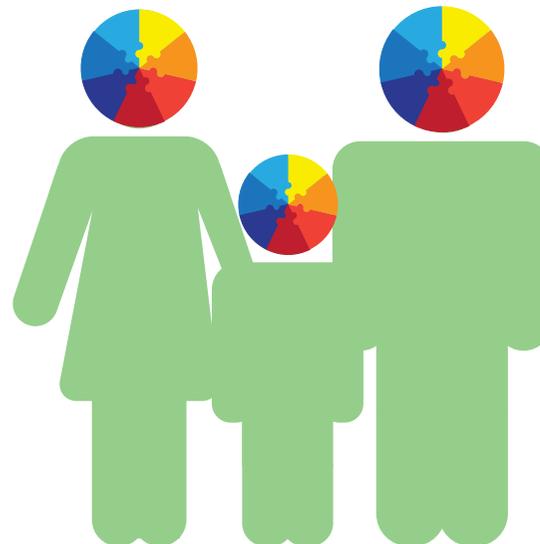
## Join the conversation

We would like you to share your individual actions towards Wales' well-being goals. You can join the conversation on Twitter using the hashtags #PHWWFG, #BetheChangeWales or e-mail the Health and Sustainability Hub: [publichealth.sustainability@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:publichealth.sustainability@wales.nhs.uk).

We would also like to hear from colleagues interested in helping to develop further '*be the change*' guides.



Simple **acts**  
can have big  
**impacts**



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