

# The Sustainable Steps Series

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



## A Healthy Heritage

*“Supporting our Culture and Welsh Language in the Workplace”*

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’* towards 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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Michael Darke

Abertawe Bro Morgannwg  
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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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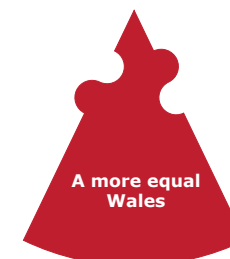
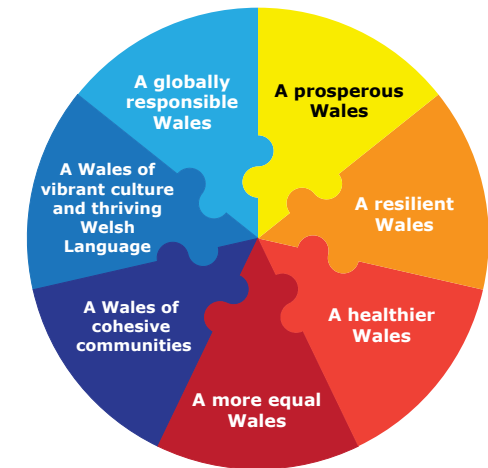
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# Contributing to Wales' well-being goals

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 for supporting our culture and Welsh language in this guide support (at least) three of Wales' well-being goals.



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# Sustainable steps

*'A Healthy Heritage' highlights some of the practical ways in which we can contribute to Wales' well-being goals by supporting our culture and Welsh language in the workplace.*

- ▶ Organise a skill swap – if you have a particular skill, such as singing, crocheting or creative writing, set up a lunch and learn to share with colleagues!
- ▶ Make sure that you have a free library card for accessing work (and leisure-time) resources. Information on Welsh Libraries is available [here](#).
- ▶ For team away-days, include a visit to a local art gallery or museum. You can find attractions [here](#).
- ▶ Start a book exchange to recycle and share your old reads. You could turn an old bookcase into a 'Book Cwtch'.
- ▶ Volunteer at Public Health Wales stands at cultural events. Support cultural events for groups with protected characteristics, e.g. take part in Public Health Wales' presence at Pride Cymru.
- ▶ Take advantage of Wales' outdoor cultural spaces, including our parks and trails, when taking part in physical activity.
- ▶ If you are a Welsh speaker or learner wear a 'Cymraeg' or 'Dysgwr' lanyard and add the 'Iaith Gwaith' or 'Dwi'n Dysgu Cymraeg' logo to your email signature to encourage others to communicate with you in [Welsh](#).
- ▶ Answer the phone bilingually. A simple 'bore da, good morning' or 'prynhawn da, good afternoon' makes it clear that we work for a bilingual organisation.
- ▶ Use a free language app, such as [Duo Lingo](#) or [Say Something in Welsh](#), to help you learn and understand simple phrases being used in the office. Practice your learning with colleagues.
- ▶ Whether a Welsh learner or speaker, set up a conversation group to help you and colleagues learn and improve their Welsh language skills.

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# The evidence

## Arts and Well-being

Being creative enhances mental health, boosts emotional and psychological well-being, helps build self-esteem, mitigates social isolation and loneliness and promotes more cohesive communities, increasing well-being among staff in health and social care.

## Welsh Language

Research shows bilingual people are better at understanding people generally, not just through the language they speak, and are better at focusing their attention and less easily distracted. There is also evidence to suggest that healthy people who are bilingual have slower rates of mental decline in old age. It is thought that compartmentalising the languages, plus switching between them at the right time, exercises the brain and has a protective function. So there are a number of positive reasons for learning the language or maintaining your knowledge and use of Welsh.

<https://www.nhsconfed.org/-/media/Confederation/Files/Wales-Confed/Arts-for-Health-and-Wellbeing.pdf>

<http://www.bilingualism-matters.ppls.ed.ac.uk/>

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## ‘Actors’ staff case studies

**Michael Darke, International Development Division**

Upon joining the team at Capital Quarter 2 in 2017, I was introduced to a small but dedicated pool of runners, who all played their part in motivating me to return to regular training and competing in events. This support network allowed me to go from being a firmly lapsed runner undertaking near zero physical activity to running four times a week. ‘Time to Move’ provided an opportunity to substantially increase my weekly mileage without impacting on my home life and other commitments.

By having that additional hour a week to train it has allowed me to undertake a longer run, which in turn has allowed me to spend many hours on the Taff Trail over the last year or so, seeing many of the beautiful sights around Cardiff. These sights include the relics of the industrial revolution dotted around the valley, marking the historic direction of travel from Merthyr and Cardiff docks, Castell Coch perched above the A470 and the forest trails behind it, and the varied and interesting wildlife that gathers around Blackweir Bridge and Radyr Weir.

I am grateful for the time and opportunity to run and explore these routes, and for allowing me an escape from running on city streets and through industrial estates, while experiencing a side of Wales and its history that isn’t seen by everyone, and feel like there is still more to see just a short run from Cardiff city centre.

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## ‘Actors’ staff case studies

### Abertawe Bro Morgannwg Local Public Health Team

Our Welsh language journey began when we recruited to an ‘essential’ Welsh speaking role that had been developed to work with our local schools. What quickly became apparent is that our new colleague only used their Welsh when working with the schools. As a team, we felt this was a wasted opportunity; especially as we had such a range of Welsh language skills and confidence within our team. So for a little while, supported by our fluent Welsh speakers, we all began clumsily using phrases and making up wonderfully bent Welsh sentences and laughing when we worked out what we’d said. But everyone got used to hearing Welsh more often and we had fun trying to bend our mouths around ‘ch’s and ll’s and learning wild idioms. Before we knew it our bases were bilingual; and while not everyone participated, no one felt left out.

Then we learnt about the Welsh Language Measure and what the imminent standards meant for our daily practice. There were some of us that were really excited but some of the team were nervous. We didn’t want the team to feel that way so, with the endorsement of our Senior Management Team, we developed a local action plan. This plan looked at staff development and provided assurance to the team that everything was achievable. Fortunately, we had sufficient warning to designate a champion, troubleshoot some of our processes and learn to get better in some aspects of our daily work.

We knew we had to do our part to meet the Well-being of Future Generations Act and the Welsh Language Measure, but we were also eager to learn, develop new skills and build an inclusive bilingual environment. To date, there is definitely a tangible increase in Welsh language competence and willingness to have a go. And with all the team pulling together to support each other, it has been fun and it’s definitely not scary anymore.

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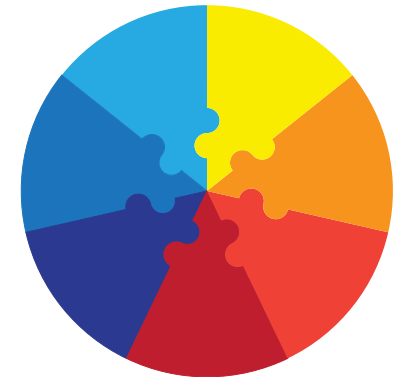
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Local Public Health Team

## Want to learn more?

## Join the conversation

# 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)





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We would like you to share your individual actions towards Wales' well-being goals. You can join the conversation in the [Public Health Wales Staff Facebook group](#) or on Twitter using the hashtag #PHWWFG, 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**