
Senedd Cymru | Welsh Parliament

[Y Pwyllgor Cydraddoldeb a Chyfiawnder Cymdeithasol](#) | [Equality and Social Justice Committee](#)

Ymateb gan: Prifysgol Wrecsam | Evidence from: Wrexham University

Wrexham University May 2025

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Please accept this written response for consideration at Senedd Equality and Social Justice Committee for the post legislative scrutiny for the Well- being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (the Act).

This written response is given in a professional capacity. I currently lead Wrexham University Civic Mission work and have worked for 10 years to develop our approach to the Well -being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and have worked collaboratively with many partners to develop projects and involve citizens. I am currently vice chair of Wrexham and Flintshire Public Service Board. All the work I lead on, on behalf of the university is framed around the Act, working locally, regionally and in part nationally.

1.0 Context

1.1 The Act is at the heart of our new Wrexham 2030 vision [V&S 2030](#) and is enabled and delivered through our co created Civic Mission work [Civic-Mission-five-year-strategy.pdf \(wrexham.ac.uk\)](#) [Wrexham Rising: The Power of Partnerships by WREXHAM RISING PODCAST SESSIONS \(spotify.com\)](#) The Act has provided the policy and legislative framework that drives all we do, striving towards a Wales we want, having the principles of sustainable development driving decision making and action. We have strived to make the Act the peoples act engaging young people and children in our work. Our work is mapped across our contribution to the 50 national well-being indicators and 17 milestones. The 5-year plan/strategy also echo's the Cymru Can theory of change to enable our strategic direction to support that of national and globally important legislation.

1.2 As a Higher Education institute rooted in place and dedicated to the communities, businesses and people we serve locally, regionally and nationally, we are not required to statutorily respond to the Act in legislative terms (although is required by Medr as one of the 52 public bodies accountable). We choose to use the Act as a framework for all we do on a strategic level because we understand and want to be part of leading the collective challenge of delivering whole system change

on this scale and the need for all organisations to step in and work together to improve the to the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being for Wales.

1.3 Universities and now the wider Tertiary education sector, through Medr have an important and unique role to play to ensure the Act is embedded and strives to meet the ambition set out in the Cymru Can and respond to the 50 calls to action in the recently published 10 year report from the Future Generations Commissioner and the Auditors Generals review that highlights the Act has not achieved the systems wide change it has set out to achieve.

2.0 Our work

2.1 We have a positive, supportive and proactive relationship with the Future Generations Office (FGO) and we have been delivering and developing the collaborations, infrastructure, projects and education to support and implement the Act in several ways across Wrexham and the North Wales region.

2.2 In our work over the past decade as a key anchor institution we have been at forefront of using the Act as a tool to enable and embed the five ways of working and strive to deliver and develop collaborative work that engages and involves citizens, prevent challenges from getting worse, integrates across the region, simplify the partnership landscape and enabling a long term approach.

Our role as a university led by Nina Ruddle, Head of Public Policy Engagement include:

- Membership of the Supporting Organisations Network for the Future Generations Commissioners Office sharing ideas, good practice and events that support public sector bodies.
- Invited member of the Well-being of Future Generations National Stakeholder Forum with Welsh Government
- Vice chair of the Public Service Board in Wrexham and Flintshire and where we led the merger of Wrexham and Flintshire PSBs
- Advisor to the shaping place for well-being whole systems approach to PSB across Wales (PHW and Health Foundation)

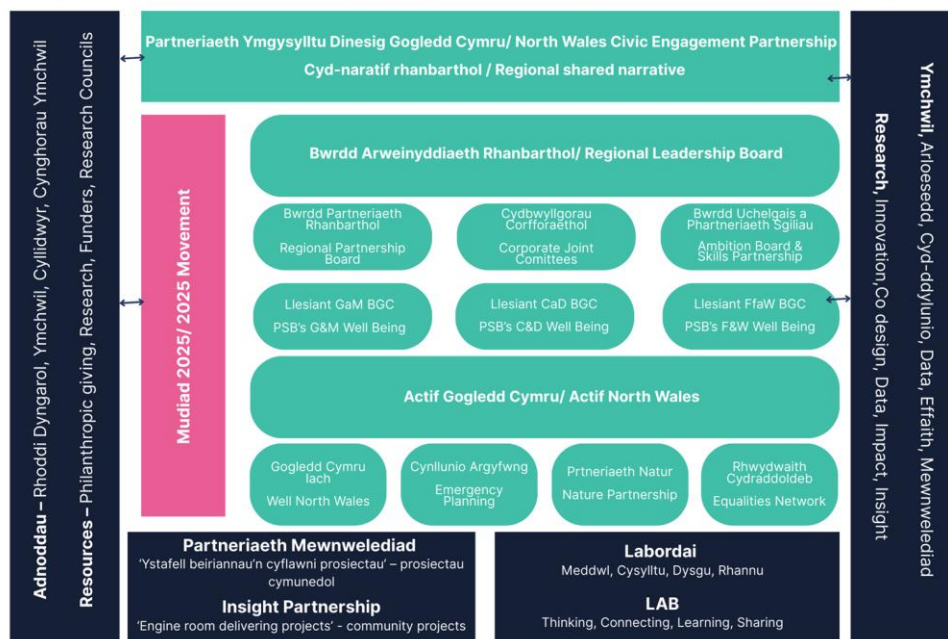
2.3 Our work to enable the Act include:

- **Established and Leader of the North Wales Public Service Lab** (systems leadership programme, C4C Community for Community, network of system leaders and change makers that are all framed around the education we need. These are also networks to connect, share and develop the new ways of working and thinking, in particular, to think and act using a futures lens). The Lab is part of our work to tackle key societal challenges. We have established and run a masterclass programme for systems leadership, space to explore key challenges and developing a network and community of practice for system leaders and change makers. The NW Public Service Lab has enabled a regional approach to Climate Change risk assessments in partnership with the FGO, University of West of England and Futures Institute at Edinburgh university. This has been a key focus for us enabling and cultivating a long-term learning programme and network that support the thinking needed, not just the actions, to deliver against an ambitious legislation.

- **Pioneer of the North Wales Insight Partnership (NWIP)** - we have led the establishment as a collaborative to support the development of the well-being assessment in 2021 and drive innovation, learning and pooling of resources and expertise around 3 key challenges areas of research, engagement and systems change. The insight partnership is open to all and is convened, led and supported by Wrexham University for the 3 PSB's across the region, with support that was secured from the co production network for Wales for 5 years in 2022. This is an 'open invitation and is attended by a number of a vast range of partners from NRW, Welsh Government, data Cymru, Audit Wales, Museums Wales, Housing Associations, Bangor University etc.
- **Key project that have emerged from this work are particularly focused on collaboration and involving citizens in our work meaningfully:**
 - Citizens engaged in data analysis of climate change data and development of our thinking around deliberative democracy approaches, report produce for PSBs
 - Future Leaders pilot with young people in Ysgol Clywedog in Wrexham. The PSB members worked with young people for them to help shape the plans and what they want to see for their futures in Wrexham and has subsequently rolled out across 15 schools across the region supported by Xplore!
 - North East Wales Futures engaging citizens in Ty Pawb into different groups across the area to come together and share what matters to them in different ways, including establishing a multi-cultural hub, and hosting an event to share stories, through rap, song, poetry and artwork. This is growing and developing led by the Welsh Government Community Cohesion team. This work also enabled a diverse together conference in March 2025.
 - Co-produced Community Narratives – working with Artists and researchers in 6 communities across North Wales one in each county, to focus on using arts, poetry and creative methods to capture the stories from these communities. This brings a richness to the data that we use to focus and enable action around key priorities. [Co-producing-Community-Narratives-info-for-Denbighshire-2.pdf](#)
 - We have other priorities that we are developing around Welsh Language, Anti racist training and developing a region wide engagement platform and website.
- **Leader of the North Wales Civic Engagement Partnership (supported by Medr funding)**

On 1st May 2025 we convened leaders from across all sectors, with over 40 leaders coming together to develop a shared narrative for the region so that we can navigate the complexity and ensure the resources across the partnership landscape is driven to where is it needed. We will work together to integrate our objectives, and we will work with citizens to shape the priorities and future of our work. To support this, we are developing an enabling infrastructure around the partnership landscape and delivering with communities through the NW Insight Partnership, leading learning with the NW Lab and enabling pool resourcing and research, data and evidence to understand the impact. [University reflects on decade of impact as Future Generations Report 2025 released - Wrexham University](#)

Tirwedd Partneriaeth Gogledd Cymru/North Wales Partnership Landscape



Our work and expertise has been cited by OECD [How to Make Societies Thrive? Coordinating Approaches to Promote Well-being and Mental Health | OECD iLibrary \(oecd-ilibrary.org\)](#), National Co-ordination Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE) and UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) where our regional work was used to inform a UKRI national £40M programme [Prosperous places: insights into local research partnerships – UKRI](#). Our work in Wales leading the civic mission and Trauma informed approach has led us to be partners in the new Centre for Peoples Justice [Wrexham University announces partnership in new £5 million UK-wide Centre for People’s Justice - Wrexham University](#) as well as a key role enabling the innovative Public Map Platform project in Anglesey with University of Cambridge and Cardiff, [Public Map Platform](#) with a focus ‘to make places better in the UK for the people who live there’.

3.0 A flagship North Wales focus enabled by the PSBs – North Wales Children’s University

3.1 A flagship project that has been delivered and led by Wrexham University in collaboration with Wrexham, Flintshire and then all the North Wales regional PSBs with over 20 partners nationally is the North Wales Children’s University (CU). Focused on what matters to Children and Young People from the Wrexham Well being assessment we led the approach which responded directly to this insight and call for action. The North Wales Children’s University 2023/2024 Pilot supported 1,169 young people to participate in over 27,000 hours of extracurricular activity. We worked with 51 schools across North Wales, with over 600 young people graduating from the North Wales Children’s University, across 4 graduation ceremonies (See video from one of the graduation ceremonies) https://youtu.be/WIUPS7bURIQ?si=TnU_jRDxgaXnsPiJ).

3.2 The following research report sets out 8 recommendations for further development which supports a sustainable approach for the CU across Wales.

Connecting children and young people (CYP) in the most disadvantaged backgrounds through offering structured, engaging skilled activities outside the classroom with economic connectedness to influence relative social mobility. Through extending our reach to local businesses and developing a new partnership approach to this work with the North Wales Economic Ambition Board, we have created a strong and purposeful network of opportunity for children and young people across the North Wales region. An example of this is The Tomorrow's Changemaker's programme (TCM) which is running in North Wales secondary schools for Year 8 pupils. The programme economically connects Year 8 pupils to develop essential knowledge and understanding around the circular economy and sustainability as well as developing career expectations and green skills for our future workforce. This builds on our CU recommendations and extends the offer across North Wales for CYP, their communities and the North Wales economy.

3.3 In addition to the TCM project, we have continued to realise the potential of CU to introduce CYP to new ideas, activities and careers that are not within reach of their existing social circles by working alongside local businesses, e.g. biopharmaceutical company IPSEN Global, to create innovative enrichment projects through our CU 'Project in a Box' initiative. These are delivered to schools, along with staff training, to engage CYP through practical innovative projects. Developments so far include two STEM initiatives; Hydroponics Space Pizza and Medicine in a Box and Navigating the Storm which develops our TrACE work with primary schools. These new initiatives build on our CU portfolio through new skills and innovative ways of engaging young people. The Civic Mission have also been working with partners in Welsh Government and Betsi Cadwaladr to host a conference in May, A healthier, wealthier & fairer Wales - Working together to tackle Child Poverty. It's important to understand the scale of child poverty in Wales to address it effectively.

3.4 The CU Report will be showcased here to show how we can engage children and young people from the most disadvantaged areas in North Wales and beyond. Furthermore, we were invited to share this evidence at The All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Education inquiry's 'Love of Learning'. This has promoted wider national discussion for longer term impact to capitalise opportunities for children from lower WIMD decile areas who continue to demonstrate concerning primary to secondary educational transitions which result in their significant decline in secondary academic engagement and achievement. We also supported 7 schools to deliver TEDx-style talks ('Bob Talks') on the topic of mental health and wellbeing (see playlist of talks here: https://youtu.be/yvf_YsgHlpo?si=uKTAGy91rmpawZXy).

[-Pupils from across North Wales paving the way for change in the region - Wrexham University](#)

4.0 Learning and challenges

4.1 The Act needs time to develop and shift hearts and minds in the way we work as well as building structure to build trust and drive systemic change.

4.2 Seed funding for Action

This could be supported by engaging far wider with the Act and connecting into communities with a small seed fund 'Futures Fund'. This would support the building and develop capacity and capability to see and deliver the Act as a social movement for all, not just public service responsibility. Encouraging civic society collaboration alongside and with communities.

4.3 PSB membership

Enabling the PSBs to open up membership or develop subgroups to deliver which would include community groups and in particular Town and Community Councils and enabling young people to engage in the priorities and work, being more focused on innovation and new ideas than governance. Supporting the development of innovation eco systems across civic society like the way we have led this in North Wales.

4.4 Measurement and impact – role of universities

A key challenge is measuring impact and using data and evidence effectively and enabling more collaborative working as well as pooling of resources to deliver the well being assessments and plans. This is a unique role Medr and the Tertiary sector can play, particularly universities.

The fiscal constraints on the Higher Education sector are widely publicised, the Research Wales Innovation Fund, applying for external grant funds and pooled resources from partners has funded our work enabling the Act, and our commitment as an anchor institution. More resources that are sustainable will support and enable this work to grow, deliver and measure impact and positive benefits for the communities we serve across the region. A longitudinal research focus will allow us to understand this work and way of working and share this internationally.

5.0 Conclusion

5.1 We are proud of the Act. We have a strong and passionate commitment to realising the ambitious set out and leading collaboration to do this. The Act is not a piece of isolated legislation and has provided a framework to enable change. We have many examples of this in our work some set out above. Cymru Can and the new 10-year report are important milestones to raise the profile of the Act, this gives us a renewed impetus to enable the NW Civic Engagement Partnership to hold ourselves to account on delivering on the 11 summary and (50) calls to action for public services. As always it is people not processes that deliver the Act, and this is evident with determined and committed individuals working together in North Wales. The Insight Partnership was established to build a more integrated approach across the region and enable innovative projects using the PSB regional grant from Welsh Government. Our role is to grow and develop the innovative projects and partnerships to create the systems change needed.

5.2 We will strive to continue to do this against the constraints and challenges we face, in partnership with the Future Generations office and all the partners and communities we serve. We are committed to driving and enabling the Act to deliver for Wrexham and the region.