

Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015: Post-legislative scrutiny Engagement Findings

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Engagement Summary

The following engagement summary offers an overview of the engagement programme design, delivery, and key findings.

Background

1. The Equality and Social Justice Committee is conducting post-legislative scrutiny into the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (the Act).
2. The Committee wished to hear directly from people across Wales to understand if they felt the Act had delivered on its promises since it gained Royal Assent in 2015.
3. The Citizen Engagement Team facilitated a programme of engagement with young people, community groups, and visitors to the Senedd, via focus groups, interviews, and creative engagement methods. This report summarises the perspectives shared by the participants.

Objectives

4. The objective of the engagement programme was to capture people's views, balancing geographic coverage and meaningful representation of different demographic groups and communities, on the following inquiry terms of reference:
 - How far the intended objective of the Act is being achieved; and
 - any actions which should be taken to improve the effectiveness of the Act and its implementation.

Methodology

5. The engagement programme used a qualitative research approach to capture practical stories about how life is (or is not) improving and to test the seven Well-being Goals and five Ways of Working in the Act, alongside priorities in the Future Generations Report 2025 and the Cymru Can 2030 Strategy.



Data collection methods:

6. Focus groups and interviews were held face-to-face, online, and by phone, with contributions in both English and Welsh

- **Focus groups:** Held with young people, adults, community groups, and under-represented voices (such as coastal, rural and valley communities, disabled people, and people with lived experience of disadvantage).
- **Interviews:** Offered to young people who preferred to speak privately.

7. Creative methods were used to make engagement accessible, spark imagination, and involve a wider pool of participants:



Flags for the Future asked young participants to write or draw their hopes for the future of children growing up in Wales over the next 10, 20 or 50 years.

Postcards from the Future invited visitors to the Senedd to select a postcard linked to one of the seven Well-being Goals and describe Wales in 2030 and beyond, and how it got there. Postcards were then pegged to the display.

Participants

8. A purposive sampling approach was used to source participants through working with schools, third sector organisations, and charities. The engagement programme targeted a broad cross-section of people, including:

- Young people.
- Young people with experience of (or aspiration to undertake) apprenticeships.
- Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET).
- Adults of all ages.
- Coastal and rural communities.
- Valleys and urban communities.
- Disabled people.
- Individuals with lived experience of social or economic disadvantage.
- People experiencing vulnerability or inequality.

9. A total of **324** people took part in the engagement programme. **21** engagement sessions with **151** total participants were delivered. A total of **173** Postcards from the Future were completed by visitors to the Senedd. Further information can be found in the annex section at the end of this report.

Accessibility and Ethical Considerations

10. The engagement programme adhered to the standards set out in the Market Research Society Code of Conduct and complied with relevant data protection and safeguarding legislation to ensure the ethical treatment and privacy of all participants.

11. To ensure accessibility, engagement activities were designed in plain language, and Easy Read participant guides were provided. Participants could register their interest in taking part either online or by completing the form with the help of a Commission staff member over the phone.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the programme of engagement, particularly the young people who spoke with maturity and dignity.

Executive Summary

Chapter 1: Climate and Nature

Participants acknowledged real progress in recycling services, community clean-ups, greening schemes, and investment in renewable energy and sustainable transport, which fostered pride and a sense of shared responsibility. National parks, woodlands, and coastal areas were valued for both conservation and tourism, and new flood defences were seen as protecting homes effectively. Yet concerns often outweighed positives. Waste systems were inconsistent and poorly resourced, while antisocial behaviour and visitor pressures undermined community efforts. People worried about the loss of green space to housing, fragile habitats under strain, and biodiversity decline linked to fires and land management changes. Flooding, pollution, and sewage discharges were described as urgent and damaging, eroding trust in public bodies. Transport was widely seen as unreliable and inaccessible, particularly for disabled and rural residents, and debates around renewable energy projects highlighted concerns about fairness, consent, and the long-term balance with nuclear power.

Chapter 2: Health and Well-being

Participants praised children's hospitals, community initiatives, and charities that provided supportive and compassionate care, showing how services could transform lives when accessible and consistent. Parks, leisure centres, grassroots clubs, and community gardens were also valued for promoting both physical and mental health, while free school meals and some discount schemes helped reduce barriers. However, long waiting times in health and care services dominated concerns, with many describing delays for treatment, diagnosis, and mental health support. Access to GPs was difficult, rural journeys long and costly, and disabled people faced added exclusion. Sport and leisure opportunities were often fragile, with facilities under threat, young adults, especially girls, facing limited options, and widespread safety concerns discouraging use of public spaces. Rising costs for leisure, transport, and healthy food restricted participation. Underused or poorly maintained facilities left many—especially teenagers and older people—without safe or welcoming places to gather.

Chapter 3: Culture and the Welsh Language

Participants expressed pride in Welsh identity, heritage sites, festivals, and cultural traditions, with the Eisteddfod and Welsh-medium education seen as central to sustaining the language. Schools were praised for normalising Welsh

in daily life, and adult learners described how gaining the language deepened their sense of belonging and patriotism. Community groups and coastal towns where Welsh was still heard were valued for keeping the language visible in everyday life. However, concerns were strong about uneven access to cultural events, high costs, and declining funding, with some feeling alienated in areas where Welsh language and culture were less prominent. Young people described bullying or social pressures that discouraged use outside school, while adults noted that learning opportunities were often inaccessible, inflexible, or intimidating. Participants feared Welsh risked becoming a language of education only, further weakened by second homes, English-dominant media, and limited visibility in business.

Chapter 4: The Economy and Jobs

Participants recognised positive steps in schools and colleges, where careers advisers, teachers, and outreach events gave young people guidance and highlighted apprenticeships as increasingly respected alternatives to university. Volunteering, part-time work, and tailored local support schemes were also valued for building skills and confidence. Yet careers advice was often inconsistent and too generic, leaving many unaware of realistic opportunities. Apprenticeships were widely seen as desirable but scarce, particularly in rural areas, and access was sometimes reliant on personal connections. Local economies were described as fragile, with coastal and rural areas reliant on seasonal tourism, farming under severe strain, and town centres in decline. Rising house prices and planning restrictions made it harder for younger generations to stay local, fuelling frustration that policy favoured tourism over sustainable industry. Transport costs, insecure jobs, and systemic barriers for disabled people reinforced exclusion, leaving many without fair or accessible routes into work.

Chapter 5: Impact and Implementation

Awareness of the Well-being of Future Generations Act was generally low, with most participants only learning about it during the focus groups. Once explained, its ambitions were welcomed, but people judged its impact more by whether they felt listened to and included in decisions. Positive examples, such as Swansea Council's work with older people and Torfaen's volunteer-led co-production project, showed how collaboration could build trust, empowerment, and practical results even within tight financial limits. Yet these successes were described as exceptions. More often, participants felt their views were ignored, with consultations seen as tokenistic and decisions on housing, environment, or

local services made without genuine involvement. Financial rules and short-term budgeting cycles were said to undermine long-term thinking, driving wasteful spending and leaving services fragile. Many feared that without deeper commitment to the Act's principles, systemic pressures would risk collapse across schools, councils, and health boards.

Participants' Priorities for the Well-being Act

Links to the Well-being Goals:

1. **A Resilient Wales:** Participants valued tree planting, cared-for woodlands, national parks, cultural landscapes, and renewable energy as long-term investments in resilience. Yet fragile habitats, biodiversity loss, pollution and wildfire risks, housing pressures, insecure farming, overstretched health services, and short-term financial rules left communities uncertain about their future resilience.
2. **A Healthier Wales:** Access to parks, leisure centres, cultural activities, and active travel routes was closely tied to well-being, and supportive staff and local initiatives showed services can be transformative. But years-long NHS waits, overstretched A&E, high costs for food and sport, unsafe public spaces, pollution, poor transport, and erosion of trust in institutions undermined people's ability to live healthily. Participants also called for more sustainable food systems.
3. **A More Equal Wales:** Disabled participants described exclusion across recycling, transport, health and employment. Rural residents faced higher costs and fewer opportunities; carers felt unsupported; older people experienced ageist assumptions. Inequalities in access to culture, apprenticeships, housing and services revealed a gap between equality in principle and practice.
4. **A Prosperous Wales:** Apprenticeships, skilled pathways, renewable energy, creative industries and tourism were valued, but local economies often relied on insecure seasonal jobs; farming was under strain; town centres declined; and housing was increasingly unaffordable. Short-term budgeting and fragmented systems were seen to weaken Wales's capacity for shared prosperity.
5. **A Cohesive Wales:** Volunteering, youth clubs, festivals and cultural groups built connection, trust and pride when supported. However, closures of community facilities, antisocial behaviour, uneven provision

and tokenistic consultations weakened cohesion. Safe, inclusive, accessible spaces—physical and cultural—were seen as vital to community life.

6. **A Globally Responsible Wales:** People questioned whether Wales's footprint matched its ambitions, citing exported waste, unsustainable supply chains for renewables, and the credibility of international commitments. At the same time, bilingual identity and cultural distinctiveness—and clearer pathways into science, energy and digital sectors—were viewed as assets for Wales's global contribution.
7. **A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language:** Welsh-medium education, cultural traditions, festivals and everyday use of the language underpinned pride and identity. Yet cost barriers, weaker visibility in some communities, “drop-off” after school, inaccessible adult learning, declining provision and patchy digital promotion raised concerns about sustaining culture and language for the long term.

Five Ways of Working and Cymru Can Priorities:

1. **Long-term:** Renewable energy, flood defences, affordable housing, Welsh-medium education, cultural investment and stable local economies were seen as essential long-term priorities. Short-term funding cycles, year-end spending rules and reactive fixes made decisions feel insufficiently strategic.
2. **Prevention:** Participants emphasised prevention across systems—clearing drains to reduce flooding; timely GP access and early mental health support; affordable leisure and healthier food; sustaining community and cultural assets before they decline. Prevention was viewed as cheaper, fairer and more effective than crisis response.
3. **Integration:** Participants highlighted “supercharged actions” delivering multiple wins: clean beaches supporting health, pride and tourism; leisure centres reducing isolation while boosting the local economy; renewables cutting bills while tackling climate change; apprenticeships building skills, resilience and local incomes. They wanted policy and funding that consistently back these interlinked benefits.
4. **Collaboration:** Grassroots volunteers, charities and peer networks are crucial but overstretched when left to carry responsibility alone. Where schools, councils, employers and services worked with communities as

equals—echoing co-production successes—trust and innovation flourished.

5. **Involvement:** The weakest area across themes. From healthcare design and energy siting to cultural provision and local planning, many felt unheard or excluded—especially disabled people, rural residents, carers and low-income families. Fairness and genuine inclusion were seen as essential for the Act's ambitions to succeed.

Engagement Findings

This section sets out the views shared by participants. It is organised around the five themes: Climate and Nature; Health and Well-being; Culture and the Welsh Language; Economy and Jobs; and Impact and Implementation.

Climate and Nature

The theme of Climate and Nature is divided into four sub-themes: **waste, recycling and public space; green spaces and biodiversity; water quality, rivers, coasts and flood management; and energy, transport and the transition.** Each sub-theme sets out participants' lived experiences of what is working well and what is not, before drawing out their priorities for the Act, the seven national well-being goals, and the five ways of working.

Waste, Recycling & Cleanliness of Public Spaces

What is working well

12. Participants across Wales recognised improvements in recycling. Young participants highlighted how households *“already separate their waste, everyone is on board with the recycling bags, we all make an effort”*. Others described Wales as having *“excellent recycling services... when it's set up properly, people will play their part”*.

13. Participants from Newport praised their city as *“great at recycling”*, while a participant in Conwy explained, *“We are at the forefront here in Conwy... we have a service in our village once a month to recycle big items like washing machines, etc”*.

14. Across Wales, participants described a strong sense of community pride in caring for local spaces. In coastal towns, participants highlighted regular beach cleans as essential for supporting tourism, with one young participant explaining: *“Quite a few beach clean-ups happen in our area... the beaches look neater now”*. Rural areas spoke about litter-picking groups and volunteering that kept villages tidy and gave participants a sense of shared ownership. For many, these efforts were about more than the visible results; they created bonds between neighbours, gave participants a sense of agency, and reinforced local pride.

What isn't working well

15. Participants felt strongly about the varying types of household refuse collection systems. Many claimed that the cost of new refuse trucks and household recycling bags was not managed well. Disabled participants described the difficulties in paying for replacement recycling boxes, purposely designed for disabled people, but often broken when handled roughly by refuse collectors. The biggest concern overall related to the collection systems:

"Why is it that different authorities have different collection bins? Some...let you put everything into one bin; in others, you have to separate things, and they all go to the same place. It's terrible. They should have one system. In Cardiff, there's a blue box, a blue bag, a red bag, a green bin, black bin. It's ridiculous."

16. Frustration over bins was widespread. Overflowing, poorly placed, and too few bins were a common complaint, with *"rubbish and broken glass left scattered on the ground and public footpaths, St Mellons in Cardiff is really bad"*.

17. Experiences varied across regions. Coastal and tourist towns reported particular strain from visitor numbers. In tourist hotspots, the problem was magnified as bins filled rapidly in summer, leaving councils unable to keep up. Participants from coastal areas described *"plastic bags full of waste on the side of the road and rubbish everywhere"*, highlighting the inability of the community to manage the additional waste.

18. Participants described how progress was repeatedly undermined by antisocial behaviour and environmental damage. Reports of bin fires, vandalism, dog fouling, and illegal dumping were common frustrations.

Green Space and Biodiversity

What is working well

19. Participants across Wales celebrated visible signs of *"greening"* in their communities. They described new trees, planters, wildflower areas, and cared-for parks, linking these changes to pride, well-being, and *"more planting of wildlife flowers...that's good for the bees"*.

20. Urban participants valued planting and small green pockets in otherwise built-up areas. A participant from Newport reflected: *"We've got some lovely*

green spaces... even though we're a concrete jungle". Even modest planting was said to make towns feel healthier and more liveable.

21. National parks and woodlands were also praised as important spaces for both conservation and tourism, provided they were properly maintained:

"...climate and nature are all about our local wildlife...and doing whatever we can to support the animals...We're lucky that the National Park is looked after really well, and the coastal paths are kept in good condition too. The woodlands get cared for as well, and all of that brings in tourism, which helps our local economy."

What isn't working well

22. Participants raised strong concerns about the loss of green space to housing and infrastructure projects. Several described large areas of woodland or open land being turned into estates, leaving towns and villages dominated by concrete and traffic. These changes were seen as especially damaging in fast-growing urban centres:

"I'm worried about our local area, they're going to build more houses...It's going to turn from green to concrete. A decision like this makes life more difficult for people. It takes a large green area away from people. Damaging...nature to turn it into concrete."

23. Some participants expressed anxiety about fragile habitats under pressure from visitor numbers. The Snowdon Lily was mentioned as symbolic of what could be lost, with rising footfall seen as putting irreplaceable ecosystems at risk. *"No one wants to see the Snowdon Lily disappear... there is a risk that it will disappear forever".* This captured a broader tension between sustaining the visitor economy and protecting the very landscapes that draw people in.

24. Participants from valley communities highlighted the loss of biodiversity and landscape damage due to deliberate fires, with one participant recalling: *"Near where I live, we have had many fires on the mountain... it went on for weeks".*

25. Some rural participants claimed that the *"National Trust is winding down sheep counts to focus on nature and carbon footprint."* Grazing was framed as essential land management. Participants argued that cutting sheep numbers

lets vegetation run away, so habitats get “choked,” wildfire risk rises, and birdlife declines. As one put it:

“They’ve let plants grow on the mountain while reducing the number of sheep grazing... this is going to cause big fires.”

26. Others stressed that “when the mountains were being grazed, it has been proven that the birds were there... they thought that by boosting vegetation growth it would promote biodiversity, but [the hills] have been choked instead.”

Water Quality, Rivers, Coasts & Flood Management

What is working well

27. Some participants described visible improvements in water environments. In parts of Wales, some rivers and lakes were said to be cleaner than before, with one participant noting:

“I used to go for a walk to the 'Glen' with my grandmother when I was little, and the water didn't look clean enough to go into. But now I sometimes dip my feet in the water with the dogs. It's a lot cleaner.”

28. Coastal participants also pointed to new sea-defence schemes that had successfully protected homes, with one participant reflecting: “...I haven't heard of anyone's houses being flooded since”. Regular beach cleaning initiatives were also welcomed for keeping shorelines safe and attractive:

“A lot of campaigns have been going on to pick up litter from the beaches. The local council organises these. We see a difference as the beaches look neater now.”

What isn't working well

29. Conflicting priorities emerged around sea-defence schemes. While some welcomed them for protecting homes, others argued that the changes altered the character of beaches that local tourism depended on. As one participant put it: “We're in a tourism town... hoteliers are complaining... but I don't want to be flooded in the winter”.

30. Despite these improvements, flooding remained one of the most urgent concerns, both in rural and urban regions. One participant described the following experience:

"...we have a lot of flooding. Recently, the whole street was flooded, and the water was up to people's waists. It was so deep that I had to carry my brother on my shoulders to go down the street to get food. The problem was that the council hadn't cleaned the drains for a long time. That is what caused the flooding, and so everyone had to try to lift the drains to unblock them and remove the leaves. Every shop was destroyed on the first floor, even the pharmacy, so some people had to go without medicine. I remember there were people on the rugby field in kayaks and canoes, because the water was so deep. I remember the rugby club lost everything on the first floor. We had sandbags in the street for 4 months after the floods."

31. Water pollution was another widespread frustration, which participants described as *"diabolical and shameful"*. Participants reported sewage discharges and rubbish in rivers, which undermined trust in water companies and regulators.

"The Ely River is terrible. You see bikes, bags and rubbish floating in it. They've put up barriers to stop people dumping, and bollards to stop the trash, but it hasn't worked. There's even a spot where you could dive in, but it's unusable because the water is so dirty."

Energy, Transport & the Transition

What is working well

32. Participants highlighted visible progress in renewable energy, often pointing to solar panels on schools, public buildings, and farms. One remarked: *"Solar panels should be everywhere... car park roofs and public buildings"*. Small-scale hydro schemes were also welcomed, seen as contributing to the shift away from fossil fuels without damaging landscapes.

33. In transport, participants noticed steps such as electric buses and new cycle lanes in some urban centres. These investments were taken as signs that Wales was committed to tackling climate change, even if delivery remained uneven.

What isn't working well

34. Many participants felt that public transport across Wales falls short, with unsafe and unconnected cycle lanes proving not to be a viable alternative. Participants suggested that poor public transport is leading to congestion:

"I think traffic is worsening; it seems like people just aren't using public transport...I'm noticing the problems with buses, such as timetables. I wonder if poor public transport is encouraging people to drive into the city centre."

35. In rural and coastal areas, participants were frustrated with unreliable bus services, long waits, and routes that required unnecessary changes: *"buses aren't reliable... the connectivity is a problem,"* one participant explained.

36. Disabled participants described repeated exclusion from buses that would not stop, to inaccessible walking and cycling routes. For them, the lack of reliable and inclusive alternatives meant that climate-friendly transport options felt out of reach.

37. Energy transition also raised new dilemmas. While participants broadly supported renewable projects, energy parks or turbines placed near housing estates without community consent angered some participants.

38. Many participants raised concerns over the viability of electric cars and the environmental trade-offs in producing solar and wind infrastructure:

"Wales isn't ready for mass electric cars, the charging network is thin, grid upgrades are lagging, and many of us can't charge at home. I also want guarantees that battery minerals are sourced responsibly, because cobalt and lithium supply chains carry real human-rights and environmental risks."

39. Some participants voiced concerns over Wales' energy preparedness for the future, claiming that clean energy sources are not as effective and future-proof as nuclear:

"Nuclear is still our only viable option. Let's be honest about the whole-life footprint of a single wind turbine; steel, concrete, and maintenance of the infrastructure still need energy sourced from fossil fuels. So show, with numbers, that the clean power payback outweighs those inputs."

Participants' Priorities for the Well-being Act

Links to the Well-being Goals

1. **A Resilient Wales:** Participants valued biodiversity gains through new planting, wildflower areas, and cared-for woodlands. Yet fears of biodiversity loss, wildfire risks, and fragile habitats revealed how vulnerable communities still feel.
2. **A Healthier Wales** was reflected in accounts of green space, cleaner environments, and active travel routes that supported wellbeing. Conversely, pollution, unsafe cycling networks, and dirty rivers undermine health outcomes.
3. **A More Equal Wales:** Disabled participants highlighted exclusion from recycling systems, transport, and emergency planning. These experiences revealed where the Act's ambition for equality is not yet embedded in delivery.
4. **A Prosperous Wales:** Tourism was recognised as important for jobs and local economies, but participants described how it also strained habitats, infrastructure, and community wellbeing.
5. **A Cohesive Wales:** Community volunteering, such as litter picks and beach cleans, built pride and social connection. Yet antisocial behaviour, vandalism, and lack of community influence undermined cohesion.
6. **A Globally Responsible Wales:** Concerns about waste exported abroad, unsustainable resource use, and global supply chains left some participants doubting whether Wales's international impact matched its ambitions.
7. **A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language:** Natural spaces were valued not only for biodiversity but also for cultural identity and sense of place, reinforcing their role in sustaining local heritage and pride.

Five Ways of Working and Cymru Can Prioritise

1. **Long-term:** Participants welcomed renewable energy, tree planting, and flood defences as essential long-term investments. These were seen as future-proofing Wales against climate risks. However,

neglected drains and reliance on short-term fixes left people doubting whether policy was truly strategic. *(Links to Cymru Can's missions on energy transition and sustainable land use.)*

2. **Prevention:** People stressed that routine maintenance, such as clearing drains and rivers, would prevent flooding and costly damage. They also valued prevention through behaviour change; fostering pride and ownership was seen as more effective than cleaning up after damage. *(Aligns with Cymru Can's call for prevention funding in areas like flood management and waste systems.)*
3. **Integration:** Participants recognised how single actions brought multiple benefits, cleaner beaches boosted health, tourism, and local pride; tree planting enhanced biodiversity and community connection; renewable energy reduced bills and created jobs. These were described as "supercharged actions." *(Reflects Cymru Can's emphasis on joined-up action across food resilience, biodiversity, and energy transition.)*
4. **Collaboration:** Volunteering and community action were central, but participants emphasised that responsibility should not fall solely on them. They wanted councils, businesses, and government to share accountability, to rebuild trust in decision-making. *(Links to Cymru Can's mission on community empowerment and shared responsibility for resilience.)*
5. **Involvement:** This was described as the weakest area. From energy siting to emergency planning, participants felt unheard, with disabled groups in particular excluded from decisions and services. Genuine involvement and fairness were seen as essential for the Act to succeed. *(Connects directly to Cymru Can's focus on fairness and inclusive decision-making in the energy transition and public services.)*

Health and Well-being

The theme of Health and Well-being is divided into four sub-themes: **health and care services; active and green spaces, and sport; transport, access and cost; and community, support, and safety.** Each sub-theme sets out participants' lived experiences of what is working well and what is not, before drawing out their priorities for the Act, the seven national well-being goals, and the five ways of working.

Health and Care Services

What is working well

40. Participants described moments when health services worked well and made a real difference. Children's hospitals were praised for creating *"really supportive environments"* where staff went the extra mile. Community initiatives such as *The Hangout* and *Dusty Forge* were valued for offering free, accessible mental health support, while peer networks and charities were credited with *"stepping in where the NHS couldn't"*. These examples reassured participants that when services were consistent and compassionate, they could be transformative.

What isn't working well

41. The most consistent concern was long waiting times across all health services. In A&E, waits of 10–15 hours were described as routine. Several described waiting years for treatment, with one participant saying bluntly: *"I've been waiting for treatment for three years. And I'm still waiting"*. Another participant described the waiting times for a neurodivergent diagnosis and support:

"A family member of mine had to wait 12 months just to get an emergency appointment, and even then, the diagnosis can take up to four years. The demand for these services is so high, but unfortunately, the services haven't kept up with that. It's frustrating because mental health is just as important as physical health, and it's becoming harder for people to get the help they need when they need it."

42. Mental health services were often available only at the point of crisis. Participants felt conditions were dismissed unless severe. Disabled participants described additional barriers: letters arriving only in print, apps that did not work with assistive technology, and a sense that *"it takes away your dignity"*.

43. Access to GPs added another layer of frustration. Participants described the *"Russian roulette"* of phoning at 8.00 am, with appointments disappearing within minutes: *"not everyone can do that"*.

44. Older participants felt written off by ageist assumptions that *"everyone over the age of 50 is grouped together. But a healthy 60-year-old is very different to an 80-year-old with care needs."* While carers highlighted the strain of rising social care costs and lack of follow-up support:

"Timely access to medical services is the foundation stone...We need to remove those barriers if we want people to age well. There are so many forgotten older people, people in total isolation, and it's not self-inflicted. They've just lost the people around them."

45. Rural participants stressed the difficulty of distance, with some journeys to hospital involving multiple buses or hours of travel:

"Gwynedd is 100 miles long with one hospital in Bangor. For some people, that makes it really hard to get there. In Conwy, it's 50 miles from top to bottom, it can take two or three bus journeys, and you have to plan to be there all day, sometimes just for a ten-minute appointment."

46. Participants pointed to the closure of cottage hospitals and maternity units, alongside overstretched A&E departments. In these spaces, charities and voluntary groups often *"picked up the pieces,"* but many questioned how sustainable this was.

Active and Green Spaces, and Sport

What is working well

47. Participants highlighted a wide variety of opportunities to stay active in their communities. Parks, green spaces, and community areas were consistently described as vital for both physical fitness and mental health. Football pitches, tennis courts, leisure centres, outdoor gyms, riverside paths, and green corridors such as the Sirhowy Valley were all described as vital assets. For many, access to natural spaces was closely tied to fitness and mental health. As one participant explained:

"There are lots of parks and green areas where I live, which are really good for running, which links to the environment and keeping well."

48. Community-led initiatives also played a key role. Môn Girls Run was praised for combining physical activity with social connection, giving participants routine, exercise, and the chance to talk afterwards. Local clubs and leisure facilities were described as offering *"a lot of opportunities to keep healthy"*. Urban participants particularly valued large facilities such as velodromes and

libraries, while rural participants emphasised the importance of paths, proms, and accessible green routes.

49. Community gardens and local markets were praised for bringing people together and supporting healthier living. Youth clubs and initiatives aimed at reducing antisocial behaviour were valued, showing that when investment and care were present, people felt safer and more connected:

"They've just started a children's club in our town to try to reduce anti-social behaviour. They offer sports activities, and it's free, which is nice."

What isn't working well

50. Concerns centred on the fragility of these assets. Some facilities were seen as vulnerable to closure or neglect, with leisure centres and libraries under threat. Rural participants emphasised underinvestment in community buildings and neglected facilities such as football pitches

51. Young people emphasised that opportunities for sport dropped off sharply after age 16, particularly for girls. As one participant put it:

"[There's a] lack of opportunities for young adults to get into sports. A lot of clubs stop accepting people after the age of 16, which is really limiting, especially for girls. Many girls drop out of sports between the ages of 12 and 14, so by the time they're older, it's hard to get back into it. I personally felt the impact of this because, when I was in school, I wasn't allowed to play football. I didn't have the chance to develop in that environment, which held me back in a way."

52. Safety concerns were also strongly expressed. Despite valuing green spaces, many participants said they avoided parks and community facilities because of antisocial behaviour, drug use, and harassment:

"Where I live, it's quite dangerous to go out; there are a lot of drug dealers, and dangerous stuff happens. By my street, someone got stabbed in the head. It makes me feel like I need to be careful about where I go, who I speak to, and what time I go out. It's quite sad. If you don't feel safe going out, then you're never going to go out to exercise or meet friends."

53. Urban, young participants frequently highlighted feeling unsafe in city centres, from drug use to street harassment:

"Even in the city centre, you see so many druggies and paedophiles, anything could happen to you. We need to feel safe when we go out...There's a street...with lots of Shawarma cafes and stuff. There's always windows being smashed in. When I walk around it's so dangerous there, with so many men coming up to me and my friends saying "oh you're so pretty", it's gross."

54. Older participants also described avoiding parks and public spaces altogether, saying they felt unsafe or intimidated and "won't go out on their own. So there's not a lot for them".

55. These concerns reinforced a broader point: without safe, affordable, and accessible options, it becomes far harder for people to maintain healthy lifestyles. Participants repeatedly stressed that access was not only about facilities existing, but also whether people could afford to join, feel welcome, and get there safely.

Transport, Access and Cost

What is working well

56. Some participants welcomed initiatives that reduced pressure on household budgets. Free school meals were repeatedly highlighted as a particularly valuable support, both for children's health and for easing family costs. Others pointed to positive examples where cost and access had been addressed locally. Discounted leisure centre passes for college students were especially valued, as were schemes that opened up school gyms to the wider community and free outdoor facilities.

"...we've got two leisure centres that are easy to get to and affordable, which is great because it makes it accessible for a lot of people. There are also a lot of outdoor areas where people can get out and be active for free, whether they're walking their dogs or out running...they offer a lot of opportunities for people to stay healthy."

57. In a few rural areas, door-to-door bus services were praised as a model that worked well, helping those without cars to reach activities and health services. These examples were seen as small but significant ways of reducing barriers.

What isn't working well

58. For most, however, affordability and transport remained significant obstacles. Leisure centre memberships, swimming sessions, and sports clubs were described as prohibitively expensive, especially for large families. Paying for swimming, football, or other activities for several children quickly became unsustainable.

"Money can be a problem for some people, especially when they have to pay for swimming, and they are paying for all their kids, and they have a big family. The cost of a leisure centre membership a month for a student is £33 a month, which I think is a lot."

59. Young people also criticised inconsistent discount schemes. Those still in school at 18 described being excluded from discounts available to college students, which they described as inequitable and demotivating. Older participants stressed that rising prices excluded those on low incomes, increasing isolation and limiting participation in community life.

60. Transport was described as an equally critical barrier. Rural participants saw fares as prohibitively expensive. A young participant explained:

"As I live in the middle of nowhere, if I'm going to do something, I have to pay for a bus there, pay to go to the gym, and pay for a bus home. It doesn't feel worth it."

61. Urban participants noted fares were still far higher than elsewhere in the UK. *"The buses are expensive here... If you're under 19 in Brighton you pay 50p, but here I pay £3-£4 each time"*. High train fares further restricted opportunities, particularly for those needing to travel between towns.

62. Healthy eating was seen as particularly difficult; fruit and vegetables were described as *"too expensive,"* while unhealthy food remained cheap and widely available.

Community, Support, and Safety

What is working well

63. Community spaces were highly valued when they were available and accessible. Libraries, community centres, and charities were praised for offering safe, welcoming environments, particularly for young people:

“There’s a youth charity...which not only helps you with your mental health, but they cover arts, hip-hop, singing, dance, everything. Most children and teenagers want to take part in these sorts of things, and there are so many benefits for their mental health. It’s free, which means no one is excluded.”

64. In some areas, community-led initiatives were described as positive ways to bring people together, with participants highlighting their role in reducing loneliness and building connections across age groups. Community gardens and local markets also played a role in bringing people together and encouraging healthier lifestyles.

What isn’t working well

65. Participants across Wales felt that many community buildings were under-used and often only targeted at very young children, leaving teenagers and older people with little to do.

“I haven’t really seen the community centre being used at all, only at election time...there is quite a bit for small children to play, but there is nothing for children that are a bit older or young people like us.”

66. Participants expressed frustration that the provision seemed to decline just as young people needed it most. Older participants also felt left behind; when driving was no longer possible, many struggled to find alternatives for meeting people or staying connected, leading to isolation and declining well-being.

67. In rural areas, young people said there were no safe, affordable places to gather, with some resorting to meeting at bus stops, which felt unsafe and exposed them to risk. Participants repeatedly stressed that fear, poor maintenance, and unsafe environments discouraged people from exercising, socialising, or even travelling independently. For some, this contributed directly to isolation and declining well-being.

Participants’ Priorities for the Well-being Act

Links to the Well-being Goals

1. **A Healthier Wales:** free school meals, leisure facilities, and compassionate NHS staff supported wellbeing, but participants' accounts of years-long waits and A&E delays underlined how overstretched systems undermine the goal.
2. **A More Equal Wales:** disabled participants faced systemic barriers, carers felt unsupported, and older participants described ageist assumptions, showing that equality in principle was not equality in practice.
3. **A Prosperous Wales:** rising costs of food, transport, and leisure eroded wellbeing, especially for families and those on fixed incomes. Participants linked this to basic survival pressures that crowd out opportunities for prosperity.
4. **A Cohesive Wales:** community centres and youth clubs built pride and belonging, but closures, uneven provision, and antisocial behaviour weakened this, leaving participants feeling less connected at the very point cohesion was most needed.
5. **A Resilient Wales:** active travel and green spaces linked health with environmental sustainability, but fragile service provision exposed weak resilience.
6. **A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language:** local facilities and cultural activities supported identity and belonging, reinforcing that culture is part of wellbeing, not separate from it.
7. **A Globally Responsible Wales:** surfaced in calls for healthier diets and more sustainable food systems, connecting local wellbeing to global responsibility.

Five Ways of Working and Cymru Can Priorities

1. **Long-term:** Participants stressed the importance of earlier intervention in schools, mental health, and routine care to prevent crises. *"If you don't catch problems early, they spiral into crisis,"* one participant said. People wanted services to look ahead rather than react. (Links to Cymru Can's mission on prevention funding and investment in early support.)
2. **Prevention:** Many called for ring-fenced resources to maintain wellbeing before problems escalate, from timely GP appointments to

accessible counselling and routine health checks. They felt prevention was more cost-effective and humane than crisis management. (Aligns with Cymru Can's focus on funding prevention across health and social care.)

3. **Integration:** Leisure centres, community gardens, and green routes were described as *"lifelines"* because they reduced isolation, supported health, boosted local economies, and built pride. Participants saw these as investments with multiple wins. (Reflects Cymru Can's emphasis on joined-up action across health, economy, and community resilience.)
4. **Collaboration:** Charities, peer groups, and voluntary organisations were essential but overburdened. As one participant put it, *"the NHS should do more, it shouldn't always fall to charities to pick up the pieces."* People wanted stronger roles for councils and statutory services to share responsibility. (Links to Cymru Can's call for stronger collaboration and trust between communities and statutory services.)
5. **Involvement:** Disabled people, rural residents, and carers described poor access and systemic exclusion. They felt *"not listened to"* in how services were designed. Participants argued that fair access and genuine involvement were essential if services were to meet real needs. (Connects to Cymru Can's mission on fairness and inclusive service design.)

Culture and the Welsh Language

The theme of Culture and the Welsh Language is divided into four sub-themes: Welsh culture, heritage, and identity; Welsh in schools and young people; lifelong learning and adult education; and Welsh in communities. Each sub-theme sets out participants' lived experiences of what is working well and what is not, before drawing out their priorities for the Act, the seven national well-being goals, and the five ways of working.

Welsh Culture, Heritage and Identity

What is working well

68. Participants expressed pride in Welsh heritage, identity, and cultural assets. Iconic sites such as St Fagans, Margam Park, Hay-on-Wye, and the Big Pit were described as *"uniquely special"*. The Eisteddfod was celebrated as central to

sustaining traditions, and schools were praised for engaging young people through cultural activities.

69. Festivals and events were valued as opportunities to showcase heritage, while tourism was seen as a way of sharing Welsh culture more widely. Everyday visibility, bilingual signage, Welsh flags, and markets selling Welsh goods were described as keeping culture alive. National sports and the Welsh anthem were described as powerful expressions of identity:

"It's important to promote the cultural identity of Wales, the flag, the national sports teams, and being a people who are inclusive but still remember their history. I'm actually from England, but the hairs on the back of my neck stand up when I hear the Welsh national anthem".

What isn't working well

70. Access to cultural life was uneven. Costs were prohibitive, particularly for the Eisteddfod and Maes B, with cuts to cultural funding further reducing provision:

"I remember the Big Cheese in Caerphilly was good, but now we have the Little Cheese. Now it's just a couple of stalls, when it used to be huge and really good. Now it's terrible. I remember when the whole castle was full of stalls and activities, but now there is almost nothing. I don't go anymore, it's terrible".

71. Concerns about inclusivity were strong. Some non-Welsh speakers or learners felt alienated when events were overwhelmingly Welsh-language focused. People in border or Anglicised regions reported weaker visibility, leaving them feeling disconnected:

"My school didn't celebrate St David's Day or have an Eisteddfod, so I didn't get the same exposure to Welsh culture that others might have had. The border culture isn't as strong as it is in other parts of Wales. It's a similar situation in areas with lots of second homes, where Welsh culture and language can be less prominent."

72. Younger participants also noted that English-language culture dominated online spaces and media, while Welsh music, film, and arts were less visible and harder to access.

"I try to find books or music in Welsh, and I enjoy it. There are more things out there than there used to be...But I need to search for it. For example, it is easier to search for a book I like in English than it is to find the book in Welsh. You have to know where to go for Welsh language resources."

Welsh in Schools and Young People

What is working well

73. Welsh-medium education was consistently described as the backbone of sustaining the language.

"To keep the language alive when I'm older, I would send my children to a Welsh language school and speak Welsh at home. It's good that the language of our country is still going, especially bearing in mind the history of the language".

74. Young participants spoke with pride about how Welsh was integrated into daily life, from lessons and homework to sports teams and even gaming. One group of friends explained that when they played Fortnite, they deliberately switched to Welsh so that *"other people don't understand what we're talking about"*.

75. This sense of normalisation built confidence, especially for pupils who had started with little or no Welsh. Immersion courses were praised for enabling young people to *"go from nothing to being able to join a Welsh secondary school within two terms"*.

76. Families who did not speak Welsh at home were also choosing Welsh-medium schools because they believed it *"opened doors to the language"*. Some young participants described taking pride in teaching siblings or parents a few words so that Welsh became part of family life:

"My sister and I speak Welsh to each other. Mum can speak Welsh, but Dad can't, so we're teaching Dad a little bit of Welsh. Then he can also help me with schoolwork."

77. There was also enthusiasm for promoting the language through school activities and cultural traditions such as the Eisteddfod, with one pupil acting as

a “*Welsh language ambassador*” to encourage peers. Demand for places in Welsh-medium schools was seen as growing, especially in urban areas where new school buildings were being constructed.

What isn't working well

78. Young participants described pressures outside classrooms, where speaking Welsh in mixed groups often felt awkward or even attracted bullies. Some consistently raised anxieties about the “*drop-off*” in language use once they left education. Several admitted they expected to stop speaking Welsh after school because their families used only English at home:

“When I leave school, I don't think I'll speak Welsh any more because my family doesn't speak Welsh”.

79. These concerns fed into a broader fear that Welsh risked becoming tied too closely to formal education. Young people in border areas and more Anglicised regions described this as especially true, whereas those in North and West Wales noted that the language was still heard in daily life “*across the farms and castle lines*”. But even there, participants recognised that without everyday opportunities beyond the classroom, Welsh could wither as they entered adulthood.

Lifelong Learning and Adult Education

What is working well

80. Adults described a clear appetite for learning Welsh, driven by pride, practicality, and identity. Local provision, such as Learning Pembrokeshire, was welcomed for making lessons available within communities. Some described how learning Welsh later in life deepened their sense of patriotism:

“I'd love to get to conversational Welsh, I've found I feel more patriotic about it as I get older”

81. Others highlighted the value of everyday visibility, saying that even basic skills such as greetings kept the language alive, remarking that “*It's lovely seeing Welsh on road signs every day. It keeps it alive*”.

82. In some cases, participants were teaching Welsh, offering online lessons or supporting learners in their workplaces. They suggested that learning was not

only about individual progress but also about creating ripple effects within families, workplaces, and communities.

What isn't working well

83. Sustaining learning as an adult was described as difficult. Accessibility was the dominant issue; many courses were inflexible or unrealistic for those in work, with one participant noting that *"most of these courses require you to go and spend a week in North Wales to do a residential, which I can't do"*.

84. There were also concerns about inclusivity and motivation. Participants stressed that provision needed to adapt to different needs, such as learning disabilities, where large formal classes would not be suitable. A wider frustration was about motivation and purpose; participants wanted clearer reasons to learn, since *"much of public life still defaults to English"*

85. Confidence was another barrier. Learners often felt shy about speaking outside the classroom, particularly in English-dominant areas such as Pembrokeshire, where one participant admitted:

"Pembrokeshire's known as 'Little England beyond Wales' so it doesn't always feel like there's a big cultural push".

Welsh in Communities

What is working well

86. In coastal towns and rural areas, participants were concerned that Welsh was not heard in shops, farms, and community events, highlighting its declining social presence. Many agreed that the survival and growth of the language depends on its presence, integration and use in the community.

87. Community groups were seen as vital in sustaining the language. Welsh speakers from coastal areas described themselves as *"scattered"* and existing in small *"pockets"*. Much effort and planning are needed to bring those *"pockets"* of Welsh speakers together, but when the opportunity arises, it is seen as invaluable.

What isn't working well

88. Participants worried that, beyond strongholds in North and West Wales, Welsh was too often confined to schools and lacked visibility in wider community life. Many young people feared they would stop speaking once they left

education, and adults echoed these concerns, warning that Welsh risked becoming “the language of education only, as is happening in Ireland”.

89. Communities with high levels of migration or second homes were seen as particularly fragile, with participants worried that Welsh identity was being diluted:

“In my village, about 40% of people speak Welsh. Sadly, a lot of people still think the Welsh language is a second-class language...It’s not seen as the language of the home anymore. We have to fight for it or we’ll lose it. There are people who can speak Welsh but don’t, simply because of the surroundings they’re in.”

90. Businesses also faced criticism, with examples of Welsh disappearing from menus and signage. Some participants felt that promotion of the Welsh language was not a priority:

“If you’re asking how much resource I’d devote to culture and the Welsh language, I’d say it’s down at the bottom of the list right now. That’s just recognising the economic situation of the country. There are so many gaps in important statutory services that culture and the Welsh language just can’t be a high budget priority”.

Participants’ Priorities for the Well-being Act

Links to the Well-being Goals

1. **A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language:** Welsh-medium education, cultural traditions, and community groups show the Act’s ambitions in action, embedding pride and belonging. Yet fears of “drop-off” after school, inaccessible adult learning, and the decline of festivals reveal fragility in sustaining culture and language long term.
2. **A Healthier Wales:** Engagement in cultural life, Welsh clubs, and creative activity was repeatedly linked to wellbeing, identity, and mental health. Barriers such as cost, poor transport, or feelings of exclusion risk undermining these benefits.
3. **A More Equal Wales:** Inequalities of access remain stark. Learners, low-income families, disabled people, and those in urban or border areas

reported fewer opportunities to use or celebrate the Welsh language and culture.

4. **A Resilient Wales:** Place-based heritage, from landscapes to indigenous place names, strengthened connection and responsibility to the environment. Participants warned that when cultural stories and visibility decline, attachment to place is weakened.
5. **A Wales of Cohesive Communities:** Community-led groups, festivals, and bilingual services provided trusted spaces for connection and belonging. Yet their decline, or reliance on overstretched volunteers, risks hollowing out opportunities for cultural cohesion.
6. **A Prosperous Wales:** Participants valued the role of culture, bilingualism, and the creative industries in supporting jobs, tourism, and local economies. However, weak promotion, digital invisibility, and patchy provision risk limiting Wales's ability to realise the economic potential of its cultural assets.
7. **A Globally Responsible Wales:** Wales's culture and bilingual identity were seen as powerful tools for soft power and international reputation. Yet participants felt that limited global promotion, lack of investment, and declining cultural infrastructure reduced the country's ability to project its distinctiveness confidently on the world stage.

Five Ways of Working and Cymru Can Priorities

1. **Long-term:** The decline in Welsh use beyond school was seen as a warning against short-termism. Participants called for continuity from education through adulthood, workplaces, and community life. *(Links to Cymru Can's mission on long-term cultural investment and the 2025 Report's call for durable infrastructure rather than short-lived provision.)*
2. **Prevention:** Everyday opportunities, from community groups, clubs and signage, were valued as preventative measures against language loss and cultural decline. Cuts to arts, festivals, and adult provision were described as undermining this. *(Aligns with Cymru Can's focus on prevention funding for cultural and community infrastructure.)*
3. **Integration:** Participants highlighted that language and culture cannot be separated from wider systems: affordability, transport, digital

promotion, and community infrastructure were all interdependent. *(Reflects Cymru Can's mission on integration across social, economic, and cultural systems.)*

4. **Collaboration:** Volunteer-run hubs and community partnerships showed the value of collaboration. But sustainability was questioned, where statutory services retreated and volunteers were left to carry the load. *(Links to Cymru Can's call for shared responsibility and partnership between communities and public bodies.)*
5. **Involvement:** Young people wanted modern Welsh media, while adults wanted accessible lessons and inclusive events for both learners and non-speakers. *(Connects to Cymru Can's mission on fairness and equality in cultural access, tackling barriers faced by low-income families and disabled adults.)*

The Economy and Jobs

The theme of Economy and Jobs is divided into three sub-themes: **pathways from school to work and apprenticeships**; **local economies and housing**; and **inclusions and barriers to work**. Each sub-theme sets out participants' lived experiences of what is working well and what is not, before drawing out their priorities for the Act, the seven national well-being goals, and the five ways of working.

Pathways from School to Work and Apprenticeships

What is working well

91. Many young participants felt that schools and colleges offered a useful starting point when thinking about future careers. Careers advisers were often described as positive influences, with one young participant explaining that advisers “*come into the school, asking us what we want to be*” and that this helped them “*find the right pathway*”. Teachers were also seen as playing a crucial role when they went beyond subject teaching. A pupil recalled that their teacher “*really helped me with everything from CV writing to interview preparation and job applications,*” although they added that they were “*lucky to have her*”.

92. Careers fairs and outreach events gave pupils valuable insights into different futures, challenging the assumption that university is the only path.

Apprenticeships, once dismissed as a second-best option, were increasingly recognised as legitimate and respected alternatives:

"There's an increased awareness about the fact that you don't have to go to university. You could get an apprenticeship. Maybe a few years ago, people wouldn't have thought of that or considered it, but there are more options for people now...on social media, you can see people doing law apprenticeships and taking different pathways. You don't have to go to university and then get a job. There are different options that you can take."

93. Volunteering and part-time jobs, such as lifeguarding or refereeing, were also highlighted as important. Participants emphasised the transferable skills and confidence they gained from these experiences, describing them as useful preparation for work.

What isn't working well

94. Despite these positives, many participants described careers advice as too generic, leaving them uncertain about "*next steps*" or unaware of the full range of opportunities available. Support was said to be patchy and inconsistent, depending heavily on the school, teacher, or local resources. As one participant explained:

"For many young people, finding part-time jobs or apprenticeships can be difficult...I have a rough idea of what I want to do in the future, but I don't know where to go for advice or where to start looking for opportunities."

95. Several young people felt that schools still presented A-levels and university as the default route, leaving vocational, creative, or niche careers undervalued. One participant explained: "*I love art and would love to become an artist, but it's not really seen as a viable career option, so I'm looking at something more 'realistic' like engineering.*" Another added that "*some of the brightest kids struggle in the traditional classroom, but that's not always recognised.*"

96. A lack of exposure to vocational pathways meant many students could not picture alternative futures for themselves: "*you can't be it if you can't see it.*" This lack of visibility was felt most sharply when young people spoke about apprenticeships, which they often saw as desirable routes but difficult to access

in practice. Participants raised concerns about limited availability and barriers to entry. One explained:

"There aren't enough apprenticeships; some people who can't get one wait a year and try again...It depends if you have the right grade or if you've had work experience. If not, you have to go in at the lower level and work your way up."

97. The limited range of apprenticeships was particularly frustrating in rural and coastal areas:

"There aren't a lot of opportunities...the teacher said it would be better to look for apprenticeships outside of our community. There aren't many apprenticeships here. You have to go to England."

98. Others pointed out that certain pathways were effectively closed to those without personal connections:

"If you want to be a carpenter, you've got to know a carpenter who's willing to take you on as an apprentice; otherwise you can't go to college to do an apprenticeship."

99. Older participants compared current schemes unfavourably with those of the past; *"In the 1970s there were apprenticeships galore... that's not the case now."* Some even described today's shorter, lower-paid provision as exploitative, with one participant asking: *"Why wouldn't that kid just go out and get a job for minimum wage instead?"*

Local Economies and Housing

What is working well

100. Seasonal tourism was one of the few consistent sources of employment in coastal areas. Young people described cafés, shops and visitor attractions as reliable ways to earn money in the summer, with one noting that *"there are plenty of part-time jobs available over the summer due to tourism"*.

101. Sports facilities also provided valued options, with lifeguarding and refereeing described as well-paid and flexible. Adults emphasised volunteering as another constructive way to fill employment gaps, while local initiatives such

as People First regional support and Access to Work were praised for giving tailored support to those facing barriers.

What isn't working well

102. Many participants described their local economies as fragile and limited. In rural and coastal communities, participants spoke of “*retirement islands*,” characterised by older populations and limited opportunities outside of hospitality, agriculture, or care. Skilled or professional jobs in sectors such as engineering were reportedly scarce, forcing many to relocate. One participant explained: “*If we want to come back here and raise children here, there are no jobs that pay well enough to stay here*”

103. Participants from both rural and urban areas raised concerns over the health of the farming industry in Wales. Struggles with the rising cost of fuel, feed, and fertiliser, with unpredictable prices for produce, were blamed. Moreover, changes to subsidies and new regulations are creating uncertainty, especially for smaller family farms that rely on stability. Participants spoke of social challenges: many farms are run by older generations with few young people able to take over, finding workers is increasingly difficult, and the stress of all these pressures is affecting farmers' well-being:

“We’re being squeezed from every side, costs are up, rules are changing, and the weather is against us. It sometimes feels like farming has no future for the next generation.”

104. In the Valleys, participants described the hollowing out of industries, saying that “*there’s just no industry left anymore*”. Even where jobs existed, they were often insecure, low-paid or short-term, leaving little chance of stability. Adults linked this directly to the decline of town centres, pointing to high business rates and competition from out-of-town shops:

“Business rates are killing our shops, they’re so high that lots of places are closing, and more will follow. Shops on the edge of town are paying lower rates and making money, while high street shops are paying much more. Town centres are dying: look at Newport or Bangor, where even charity shops are closing because there’s no footfall. How can the Welsh Government support our town centres with fairer business rates, so we actually have them in the future? This is about supporting the economy and local jobs. We should scrap

town business rates and increase the out-of-town ones, because a dead town centre impacts both the economy and the community

105. Housing pressures compounded these challenges. Rising house prices, fuelled by retirees and second-home buyers, meant younger people could not afford to stay local. One participant explained: *“A ‘2 up 2 down’ cottage in Conwy is... almost £300,000. Our son...still lives with us... it’s not good for him”.*

106. Strict planning rules in National Parks were also criticised for preventing younger generations from buying or building locally. Many expressed frustration that policy choices seemed to favour tourism over sustainable industries, with one participant arguing: *“We are wasting ourselves making this a playground for tourists. All we can offer are jobs in cafés”.*

Inclusion and Barriers to Work

What is working well

107. There were positive examples of inclusive employment, with organisations like Guide Dogs deliberately employing visually impaired people and making adjustments to ensure meaningful work. Access to Work was described by some as a lifeline, covering salary costs or specialist equipment, while supportive managers were credited with making a big difference, particularly where mentoring or one-to-one support was provided in the early weeks of a job.

What isn’t working well

108. For most participants, however, the dominant story was one of barriers and exclusion. Transport was the most consistent frustration, with rural and valley participants describing unreliable, expensive and patchy services. A return bus fare from the Valleys to Cardiff was said to cost around £15, making opportunities unaffordable. Others noted that *“there’s no transport on a Sunday – like from Pembrokeshire to Tenby. It’s just not doable without a car”.*

109. Disabled participants described systemic barriers at every stage. Recruitment processes were seen as exclusionary, with one participant saying: *“If you tick the disability box, you don’t get the job. You just go to the bottom of the list”.* Even when disabled participants had the qualifications and experience, disclosure was said to *“shut the door”* on opportunities. Others spoke of employers unwilling to make reasonable adjustments, as one explained:

“Employer support is really important. Most managers aren’t equipped to deal with the complexities of employing someone with disabilities, but with the right help, like 1:1 support in the first few weeks; we can work, we want to work, and we can contribute. There’s a whole workforce out there that isn’t being used, and schemes like Access to Work just don’t go far enough.”

Participants’ Priorities for the Well-being Act

Links to the Well-being Goals

1. **A Healthier Wales:** Employment was repeatedly tied to confidence, identity, and mental health. Volunteering, apprenticeships, and part-time jobs gave young people purpose and skills, yet precarious contracts, poor transport, and exclusion of disabled people undermined wellbeing.
2. **A More Equal Wales:** Inequalities were stark across geographical differences, disability, gender, and income. Access to apprenticeships depended on personal contacts; disabled people faced systemic barriers in recruitment; and rural and coastal youths described being priced out of jobs and homes in their own communities.
3. **A Prosperous Wales:** Participants valued apprenticeships, skilled pathways, and local industries, but lamented their scarcity. Heavy reliance on tourism and insecure service-sector work left local economies vulnerable, stalling aspirations for prosperity.
4. **A Resilient Wales:** Housing unaffordability and second-home pressures were seen as eroding not only opportunities but also the cultural and linguistic fabric of communities, weakening their long-term resilience.
5. **A Wales of Cohesive Communities:** Where role models, outreach, or local schemes worked, they created trusted, supportive spaces. Yet geographic inequality and declining industries risk young people leaving, fracturing community cohesion.
6. **A Globally Responsible Wales:** Young people highlighted the importance of industries such as energy, science, and digital, connecting local ambitions to global responsibility. However, the lack of

visible pathways in these fields left many feeling excluded from contributing.

7. **A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language:** Creative, vocational, and Welsh-language pathways were valued for identity and pride. Yet cultural careers were often dismissed as “unrealistic,” making futures in the arts or bilingual sectors hard to achieve. In rural areas, declining industries and tourism pressures further threatened cultural heritage and the daily use of the Welsh language.

Five Ways of Working and Cymru Can Priorities

1. **Long-term:** Participants called for stable investment in housing, transport, and sustainable industries, stressing that short-term schemes fail to build security or resilience. They wanted policies that plan for the next generation, not just the next budget cycle. (Echoes Cymru Can’s emphasis on long-term planning and the 2025 Report’s call for sustained, durable infrastructure.)
2. **Prevention:** People highlighted the value of preventative action, for example, ensuring affordable housing and reliable transport before crises of homelessness, unemployment, or isolation develop. They stressed that early investment avoids far greater social and economic costs later. (Aligns with Cymru Can’s mission on prevention funding in housing, jobs, and local infrastructure.)
3. **Integration:** Apprenticeships and local jobs were described as “supercharged actions” that delivered across multiple goals, building skills, reducing poverty, boosting pride, and strengthening communities. Participants stressed the need for policies that deliver these multiple wins. (Reflects Cymru Can’s mission on joined-up action across skills, economy, and community resilience.)
4. **Collaboration:** Where schools, colleges, employers, and councils worked together, people saw expanded opportunities and stronger pathways into work. But too often, responsibility fell on individuals alone, undermining trust. Participants wanted statutory bodies to share accountability. (Links to Cymru Can’s call for collaboration between education, employers, and government to build resilient futures.)
5. **Involvement:** Exclusion was stark for disabled people, rural participants, and low-income families. Barriers in recruitment, training, and

transport left many unable to access opportunities. Participants argued that fair access and genuine inclusion are essential if the system is to work for everyone. (Connects to Cymru Can's mission on fairness and equality in planning, access, and participation.)

Impact and Implementation

The theme of impact and implementation sets out participants' lived experiences of what is working well and what is not, before drawing out their priorities for the Act, the seven national well-being goals, and the five ways of working.

Impact and Implementation

110. Awareness of the Act was generally low. Most participants were not aware of or had a limited understanding of its function and content. Many participants, who learned about it through the focus groups, recognised its potential importance, but were surprised it was not better known. While participants valued the Act's ambitions once explained, their contributions were shaped more by whether they felt listened to, included, and supported in decision-making.

What is working well

111. Participants highlighted some positive examples where the spirit of the Act was being realised. Swansea Council's work with older people was praised for valuing lived experience: *"It feels like we're part of the team. We bring the benefit of our years of experience in industry."* Where authorities showed genuine open-mindedness and a willingness to act on what had been discussed, participants felt more willing to collaborate, even while recognising financial pressures:

"When you've got that open-mindedness to listen, and actually put into place what's been discussed, it works. Councils see all the criticism on social media and think that's the only voice out there, but the majority of people understand that local authorities are under tight budgets, and they want to work with them to move services forward."

112. Participants felt that meaningful co-production built trust, empowerment, and practical results by bringing communities and institutions together as equals, demonstrating that innovation and collaboration could still thrive even within tight financial limits. Co-production, when done well, was described as transformative:

“The Pathway to Advocacy for Torfaen Council, covering the five authorities in South Wales East, was a real success in co-production. It accommodated everyone, it was one of the best things I’ve ever been involved with. It gave people the confidence to pursue medical issues with the hospital. It took five years to set up, but in the end, it was seen as the most volunteer-led co-production project at the time. It was led by volunteers with expert guidance, there wasn’t a ‘them and us’, just a single team. Having it led by volunteers is really important.”

What isn’t working well

113. While places like Swansea, Anglesey, and the Vale were described as “*shining examples*,” elsewhere co-production was described as superficial or inconsistent:

“Co-production isn’t a tick-box exercise like filling in a survey. You’ve got to get out from behind your desk and speak to people.”

114. The dominant picture was frustration at not being listened to, with a belief that the Act’s ambition for genuine involvement often failed in practice. Participants described campaigns against housing developments, concerns about sewage and rivers being ignored, and consultations that felt inaccessible or tokenistic:

“The community tells the council what they want, and the council ignores them. They only listen when it’s about something minor, like picking benches for a park, never anything important. Our views on contentious issues make little difference.”

115. Participants also felt that financial structures worked against the Act’s long-term vision. Rigid rules and short-term budgeting cycles were said to encourage wasteful spending at the end of the financial year, rather than strategic

investment. Many argued that giving authorities longer to spend money, or allowing them to save for larger projects, would lead to better outcomes. Others linked fragility to systemic risk, warning of collapse:

“Every school, health board is in the red... before long, this is all going to fall like dominoes.”

Participants’ Priorities for the Well-being Act

Links to the Well-being Goals

1. **A More Equal Wales:** Undermined where consultations were inaccessible, poorly promoted, or tokenistic, and where disabled participants, carers, and those with limited time or resources felt excluded.
2. **A Cohesive Wales:** Strengthened in positive examples of co-production, but weakened where communities felt ignored, excluded, or divided by inconsistent practice.
3. **A Prosperous Wales:** Threatened by short-term budgeting rules and fragmented decision-making, which undermined local economies and service delivery.
4. **A Resilient Wales:** Supported where co-production and long-term planning built adaptability, but weakened by financial fragility, siloed systems, and year-end spending pressures.
5. **A Healthier Wales:** Indirectly affected, as poor governance and underfunded services reduced trust in institutions seen as vital to wellbeing.
6. **A Globally Responsible Wales:** Challenged by concerns about transparency and accountability, raising questions over whether commitments can be delivered credibly.
7. **A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language:** Linked to calls for meaningful participation and identity, showing the importance of local voice in shaping cultural priorities.

Five Ways of Working and Cymru Can Priorities

1. **Long-term:** Participants called for budgeting rules to be reformed so councils can plan beyond the year-end cycle, save for larger projects, and invest sustainably.
2. **Prevention:** Participants wanted early action on financial planning and community voice to avoid problems escalating, echoing Cymru Can's call for no more short-term fixes.
3. **Integration and multiple benefits:** Trust, inclusion, and co-production were seen to strengthen services and resilience, clear *supercharged* actions delivering across multiple goals.
4. **Collaboration and empowerment:** Where genuine partnership was tried, participants felt ownership and confidence. But without cultural and structural change, collaboration risks remained superficial.
5. **Involvement and fairness:** The weakest area. Many felt unheard or tokenised, particularly disabled groups and rural or deprived communities, directly linking to Cymru Can's call to rebuild trust in decision-making and ensure fair access.

Annex 1: Interview Methodology

Questions were written in plain language so participants could contribute without prior knowledge of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. Each was internally tagged (for facilitators only) to one or more Well-being Goals, the five Ways of Working, and Cymru Can missions. This ensured that insights could be mapped directly back to the statutory framework while conversations remained accessible and participant-led.

Framework design summary

Theme	Focus	Tagged to...
Implementation & Impact	Everyday changes in communities and how decisions are made	All Goals; Long-term, Prevention, Involvement; Cymru Can mission on trust
Climate & Nature	Local environmental change, energy use, and resilience	Resilient, Healthier, Prosperous, Globally Responsible; Long-term, Prevention, Integration
Health & Well-being	Everyday barriers and supports to staying well	Healthier, More Equal; Prevention, Collaboration
Culture & Welsh Language	Access, participation, and sustainability of culture and language	Vibrant Culture & Welsh Language; Involvement, Collaboration
Economy	Security, fairness, and local prosperity	Prosperous, Globally Responsible; Long-term, Collaboration, Integration
Wrap-up	Participants' single priority for the future	All Goals and Ways; Cymru Can mission on trust

Evidence map

Framework lens	Where these questions deliver new insight	Key report or strategy hook
7 Goals – Prosperous, Resilient, Healthier, More Equal, Cohesive Communities, Vibrant Culture & Welsh Language, Globally Responsible	Personal stories expose which goals feel tangible and which are invisible.	2025 Report highlights unequal progress and nature/climate emergency

5 Ways of Working – Long-term, Prevention, Integration, Collaboration, Involvement	Tests whether the “how” of decision-making is experienced on the ground.	Report criticises short-term budgets & lack of involvement
Cymru Can Missions – Implementation & Impact; Climate & Nature; Health & Well-being; Culture & Welsh Language; Well-being Economy	Aligns with the Commissioner’s 2030 theory of change while focusing on lived outcomes.	Cymru Can seeks faster, deeper change

Why these questions add value

- **Fresh angles** not covered by the Commissioner’s engagement: the 2025 Report focuses on system-level recommendations (e.g. food resilience plan, prevention budgets, culture bill, rebuilding trust). This framework captured whether those broad asks feel visible and relevant in people’s daily lives.
- **Targeted to the five Cymru Can missions** – Implementation & Impact; Climate & Nature; Health & Well-being; Culture & Welsh Language; Well-being Economy – giving the Committee a mission-by-mission evidence base.
- **Connected to the legal spine of the Act** – Every question was designed to test whether the long-term, preventative, integrated, collaborative and involvement principles were experienced by ordinary people.

Creative methods

To make the framework more accessible and spark imagination, we used creative methods alongside the core questions. These broadened participation and encouraged people to reflect on Wales’s future in a more personal way:

Flags for the Future – young participants wrote or drew their hopes for the next 10, 20 or 50 years of life in Wales, expressing ambitions in their own words and images.

Postcards from the Future – visitors to the Senedd chose a postcard linked to one of the seven Well-being Goals and described Wales in 2030 and beyond, and how it got there. Postcards were pegged to a public display, making contributions visible and collective.

These creative methods complemented the question framework by capturing visions of the future in simple, accessible ways that deepened engagement.

Annex 2: Partner Organisations and Participant groups

1. Age Cymru
2. All Wales People First
3. Arts Factory Ltd
4. Boys and Girls Clubs of Wales
5. Building Communities Trust-Neath Port Talbot CVS
6. Carmarthenshire People First
7. Careers Wales NEET advisers
8. CWVYS-Council for Wales of Voluntary Youth Services
9. Cymru Older People's Alliance
10. Dewis Centre for Independent Living
11. Disability Arts Cymru
12. Disability Sports Wales
13. Disability Wales
14. Fairbourne Moving Forward
15. Llamau: Education/Employment programme for at-risk youth
16. MENCAP – Ynys Mon
17. Merched y Wawr Capel Garmon, Llanrwst
18. Pembrokeshire People First
19. Porthcawl Environment Partnership
20. Pwyllgor Cymraeg Aberconwy
21. The Wallich Shadow Board

22. Working Wales NEET advisers

23. Youth Cymru outreach hubs

Schools

1. Cardiff West Community High School, Cardiff.
2. Cathedral Independent School, Cardiff.
3. Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymney, Blackwood.
4. Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Bryn Tawe, Swansea
5. Ysgol Uwchradd Bodedern, Ynys Mon.
6. Ysgol Uwchradd y Creuddyn, Conwy.

Annex 3: Participants' Demographic

Overview of Participant Demographics and Geography

A total of **324** people engaged with the engagement programme:

- **21** engagement sessions with **151** total participants
- **173** Postcards from the Future were completed by visitors to the Senedd.

By Priority Audience:

- **Young people** formed the largest group with **64 participants (42%)**, spanning coastal rural (14), urban (27), and valleys (23) settings.
- **Disabled people** contributed **36 participants (24%)**, spread across rural, rural coastal, and all-Wales groups.
- **People experiencing vulnerability or inequality** (previously categorised as “homeless”) added **30 participants (20%)**, with voices from rural, valleys, and urban contexts.
- **Older people** contributed **18 participants (12%)**, across coastal, rural coastal, and all-Wales groups.
- **Youth (general, not school-based)** made up **3 participants (2%)**, via an all-Wales organisation.

By Regional Setting

- **Urban/valleys only** groups engaged **48 participants (32%)**, mainly in Cardiff West, Rhondda, Islwyn, and Swansea East.
- **Rural/coastal only** groups accounted for **62 participants (41%)**, with strong contributions from Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire, Aberconwy, and Ynys Môn.
- **All-Wales and mixed-setting groups** provided **41 participants (27%)**, reflecting organisations that cut across geographies.

By Constituency / Geography

- The highest concentrations of participants came from:
 - Cardiff West: 35 participants (23%)
 - Pembrokeshire: 15 participants (10%)
 - Rhondda: 13 participants (9%)
 - Islwyn: 14 participants (9%)
 - Aberconwy: 19 participants (13%)
 - Ynys Môn: 6 participants (4%)
 - Carmarthen West & South Pembrokeshire: 12 participants (8%)
 - Swansea East: 8 participants (5%)
 - South Wales (general): 10 participants (7%)
- **All-Wales organisations** added **19 participants (13%)**, offering perspectives that cut across local boundaries.

This breakdown shows a **balanced mix of rural, coastal, urban, and valleys voices**, with notable crossover between categories. While young people were the largest single audience, **over half of all participants (53%)** came from groups often excluded from decision-making (disabled people, older people, and those facing vulnerability or inequality). The **geographic distribution** demonstrates that the engagement reached into both **densely populated centres** and **rural/coastal areas**, while the **27% from all-Wales or mixed setting**.

