



Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol
MERTHYR TUDFUL
MERTHYR TYDFIL
County Borough Council

FOCUS ON THE FUTURE

Well-being in our Community

**Annual Performance Report
2018 - 2019**

HAVE YOUR SAY

This document is a summary performance report on the priority areas in the Corporate Well-being Plan during the 2018/19 financial year.

We welcome your thoughts on this report and the work of the Council. You can contact us using the details below.

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Annual Improvement Report

Our Annual Performance Report is a statutory document (a document that we, as a Council, are required to publish in line with our regulations). We publish the Annual Performance Report to communicate our self-evaluation of delivery against our well-being objectives. The intention of this document is to provide an overall assessment of Council performance during the year. This document relates to the year April 2018 to March 2019.

This report includes the following section:

- [Section 1: Quantitative Data](#)
- [Section 2: Qualitative Data](#)
- [External Regulators](#)

Corporate Well-being Plan - Focus on the Future: Well-being in our communities

- Focus on the Future sets out the Council's well-being objectives from 2017 to 2022. The plan represents the Council's contribution to achieving the seven national well-being goals, and sets out the main priorities over the five years. Having a clear set of corporate priorities ensures our Councillors have a robust framework to guide their decision making and monitor our plan to ensure it is succeeding.

External Regulators

- Our work is scrutinised by external regulators to ensure that we use public money effectively to deliver benefits to our communities. A summary of latest published audit and inspection reports can be found in the ['External Regulators'](#) section.

Seven well-being goals

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 is about improving the economic, social, cultural and environmental well-being of Wales. For the first time in law, public bodies are working towards the same purpose. The Act puts in place seven well-being goals which represent the shared vision for Wales and makes it clear the listed public bodies must work to achieve all of the goals and not just one or two. This is shown in the figure below:

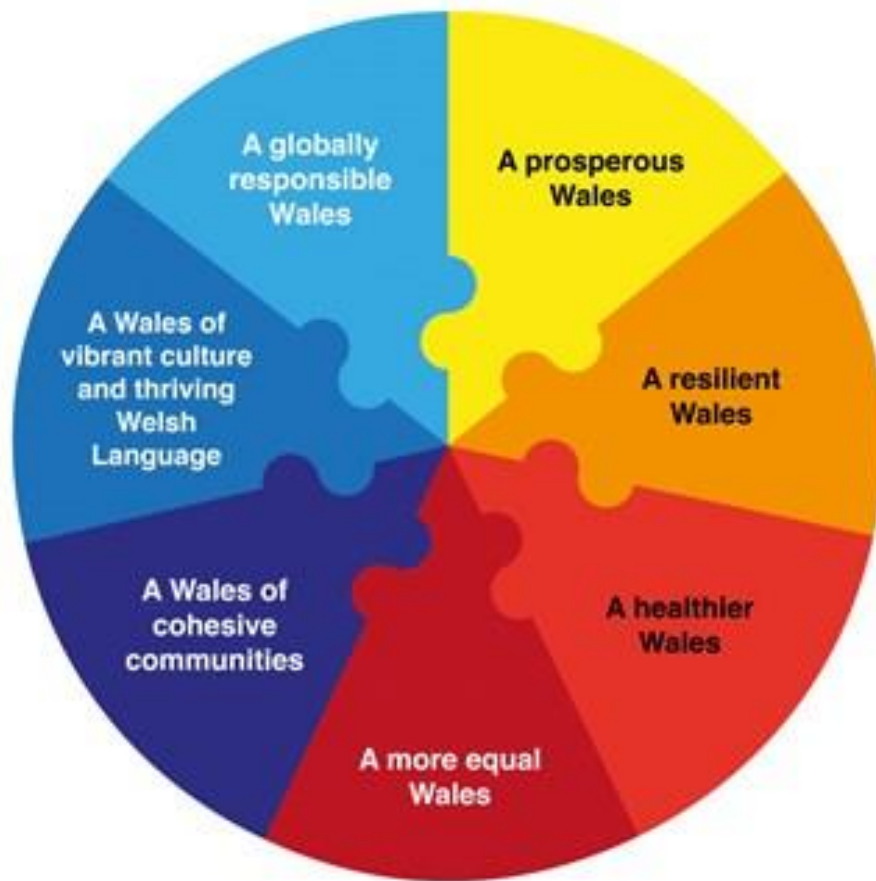


Figure 1 – Seven Well-being Goals for Wales. (Please see [Appendix 1](#) for a list of their definitions.)

The Act places a legal duty on public bodies to adopt sustainable development as the central organising principle when setting well-being objectives and in taking steps to meet those objectives. In the Act, sustainable development is exemplified by the five ways of working.

Sustainable Development

The Act confirms that sustainable development is the central organising principle that public bodies must apply when making decisions and taking steps to achieve their well-being objectives. Put simply: *“public bodies in Wales must think about the long term impact of their decisions, to work better with people, communities and each other, and to prevent persistent problems such as poverty, health inequalities and climate change.”* (Future Generations Commissioner: Sophie Howe).

There are five ways of working that public bodies must adopt to evidence how they have used sustainable development as their central organising principle. Following these ways of working offers a huge opportunity to make long-lasting, positive change to current and future generations.



Long term

The importance of balancing short-term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to also meet long-term needs.



Prevention

How acting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse may help public bodies meet their objectives.



Integration

Considering how the public body's well-being objectives may impact upon each of the well-being goals, on their other objectives, or on the objectives of other public bodies.



Collaboration

Acting in collaboration with any other person (or different parts of the body itself) that could help the body to meet its well-being objectives.



Involvement

The importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the well-being goals, and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area which the body serves.

Revenue Budget

The Council sets a revenue budget each year. This revenue budget covers the costs of the services the Council provides, and is paid for by service users, Welsh Government Grants, Council Tax and Business Rate payers. For 2018-2019, the Council's revenue budget was **£117,461** million.

In 2010-11, in order to meet the reduced budget settlements forecast as part of the UK Government spending cuts to address the national debt, we began the process of identifying where we could make financial savings.

Medium Term Financial Plan

The Medium Term Financial Plan was revised in 2018-2019 to take account of reductions to the monies received from the Welsh Government. The Council set its Medium Term Financial Plan to achieve the savings established in the Settlement.

The provisional revenue outturn for 2018-2019 was reported to Cabinet in **June** 2018. The published report can be read by following the link [Cabinet Report](#).

Table 1: the provisional revenue outturn for 2018/19 by main service area

Revenue Outturn	£ '000
Learning (including schools)	44,755
Social Services	33,401
Community Regeneration	3,322
Neighbourhood Services	10,702
Leisure Trust	2,425
<i>All other Council Services (including Corporate Centre Costs)</i>	22,856
Total	117,461

This time last year we reviewed the first year of the Council's response to the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. You will recall that to respond to the Act the Council approved its first **Statement of Wellbeing** in March 2017 along with its new Corporate Wellbeing Plan – **Focus on the Future: Wellbeing in our Community** for 2017 to 2022 in April 2017. In this document we established the rationale for our proposed well-being objectives and the steps to achieve them. Following this, the document has been strengthened along with changing our working arrangements to better support delivery.

The **Statement of Wellbeing** and Corporate Well-being Plan – **Focus on the Future: Wellbeing in our Community** for 2017 to 2022 signify the next steps in the journey to embed sustainable development across the Council. These documents set out our plans that look to achieve improvements across the four pillars of well-being, namely: economic; social; cultural; environmental.

Learning from our first year, we streamlined our well-being objectives from 9 to 4. This enabled us to become far more focused on what needs to be done in delivering the objectives for our citizens. To ensure our wellbeing planning remains relevant to the needs of people living and working in Merthyr Tydfil, our annual Wellbeing Statement will assess whether our wellbeing objectives are appropriate and identify ways to maximise our contribution to achieving the seven national wellbeing goals. Looking forward, we have set out our future ambitions for wellbeing in our Statement of Wellbeing 2019 to 2022.

In 2018-19 we had four wellbeing objectives. These are:

Best Start to Life

At the end of the academic year 2018, outcomes were **unsatisfactory**. This is because although overall attainment at foundation phase was good, attainment in key stages 2 and 3 was adequate and unsatisfactory in key stage 4. Improving attendance remains a priority for the council as does reducing exclusions rates across all schools.

Working Life

Over the period of 2018-19; the positive position in relation to business demography of Merthyr Tydfil has been sustained. There has been a 2% reduction in the percentage of working aged people with no qualifications; which enables individuals to demonstrate improved skills levels when applying for jobs. However, many key economic indicators remain stubbornly below the Wales average. We have therefore judged our performance to be **adequate**: our strengths outweigh our weaknesses, but there remain some important aspects that require improvement.

Environmental Well-being

Reducing the amount of waste that we produce and recycling as much as possible brings economic as well as environmental benefits. During the period of 2018-19 the outcomes were deemed **adequate** in Merthyr Tydfil. Whilst the length of time taken to clear fly-tipping has remained very positive, the amount of waste recycled, reused and composted by residents fell slightly, but still exceeded the Welsh Government's target. However, in order to meet Welsh Government's ambitious target to recycle 70 per cent of all waste by 2025

and be 'zero waste' by 2050, we need to do even more. To that end, we would encourage all of our residents to prevent waste wherever possible and recycle everything that can be recycled.

Living Well

During 2018/19, Children's Services have continued to deliver positive outcomes for children and young people in Merthyr Tydfil under the duties of the Social Services and Well-being Act. We are enormously proud of our looked after young people, some of whom have achieved local, national and international recognition for their outstanding achievements. Within Adult Services we continue to be committed to support people to live fulfilled lives in their own homes and communities and have worked in partnership with Cwm Taf University Health Board and neighbouring authorities to this end. This year the Stay Well @ Home Service received Social Care accolade awards. There were two awards on the same evening for the health care awards: 'working seamlessly across organisations'; and 'outstanding contribution to prudent healthcare'. The tackling poverty agenda continues to be a focus across the County Borough and is led through a strategic group of not only the council, but its partners in Health and the third sector. We are clear that early intervention and prevention in partnership with our communities provides the best possible solution to a range of the challenges we face as a local authority. There continues to be a focus on Early Intervention and Prevention as we move forward into 2019/20. Taking the above into consideration, we have therefore judged our performance as **adequate**.

Based on the judgements identified in the four well-being themes above, our overall judgement is **ADEQUATE**.



Ellis Cooper
Interim Chief Executive

Our Shared Vision

To strengthen Merthyr Tydfil's position as the regional centre for the Heads of the Valleys, and be a place to be proud of, where:

- People learn and develop skills to fulfil their ambitions
- People live, work, have a safe, healthy and fulfilled life
- People visit, enjoy and return

Please see the Council's [‘Our Shared Vision’](#) for further information.

Measuring well-being

To help understand our performance by considering well-being and to encourage us to consider the benefits of working in different ways, the performance information in this report will be organised in two sections. The first section uses quantitative data to measure the success of each well-being theme, and the second section utilises qualitative evidence to demonstrate impact from the perspective of community members.

This report looks back over our performance during 2018-19, and acknowledges that how we deliver is just as important as what we deliver. In order to make a real difference to people's lives, and the greatest possible contribution to the seven well-being goals, we need to do different things. This report therefore, will evaluate impact using two types of data:

- Quantitative data (population indicators, and local performance indicators)
- Qualitative data (case studies and people voice)

Defining Success

The Chief Executive identified his personal aspirations for the Local Authority to be one that is top performing, sustainable and with a good reputation for securing improvements. To determine if we are a top performing Council, we will evaluate improvements made in our priority areas and compare outcomes of performance across Wales where this information is available.

Our priority areas by theme are:

Best Start – Improve the educational outcomes for all children and young people

Working Life – Developing the environment / infrastructure for business to flourish

Environmental Well-being – Maximise efficient use of materials and resources by means of the waste hierarchy

Living Well – Safeguarding children and adults who are at risk of harm

Self-Evaluation: Overall Summary

The overall position for the delivery of the well-being objectives in the Corporate Wellbeing Plan is **Adequate**, where this means: ‘some strengths where our comparative position is lower median, with some rates of improvement and/or evidence of some positive impact on change to outcomes’. Of the four wellbeing themes: 1 has been judged unsatisfactory and 3 have been judged adequate.

Our Well-being Objectives: summary of performance

Table 2 provides a summary position for the nine well-being objectives, and the aggregate judgement for each of the four well-being themes.

Table 2: the well-being objectives identified for Merthyr Tydfil	Judgement
BEST START TO LIFE	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children and young people get the best start to life and are equipped with the skills they need to be successful learners and confident individuals 	
WORKING LIFE	Adequate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People feel supported to develop the skills required to meet the needs of businesses; with a developing, safe infrastructure making Merthyr Tydfil an attractive destination 	
ENVIRONMENTAL WELL-BEING	Adequate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communities protect, enhance and promote our environment and countryside 	
LIVING WELL	Adequate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People are empowered to live independently within their communities, where they are safe and enjoy good physical and mental health 	

Chief Officer: Learning

Lead Member

Strategic Focus

Sue Walker

Councillor Lisa Mytton

Raising Standards

Background

Raising standards of attainment is a priority for the Council. Well-being is strongly linked to attainment. Pupils with better health and well-being are more likely to be ready to learn and achieve better academically.

The early years are fundamental to a child's potential for learning and their future life chances. We want all children to be equipped with the skills they need to reach their academic potential, and contribute as responsible citizens to their own development and that of the wider community.

In schools, our priorities are to drive improvement in standards of literacy and numeracy, through improving the quality of teaching and leadership, and to reduce the impact of socio-economic deprivation on educational attainment.

Objective:

Children and young people get the best start to life and are equipped with the skills they need to be successful learners and confident individuals

Our evaluation says this well-being theme is:**Unsatisfactory**

The annual position of outcomes (August 2018) is unsatisfactory; this is because although overall attainment at foundation phase was good, attainment in key stages 2 and 3 was adequate and unsatisfactory in key stage 4. The need to improve attendance remains an area for further improvement.

Table 3[Performance Key](#)

Key Performance Indicators	2017	2018
% of pupils who achieve the Foundation Phase Outcome Indicator	88.1	85.5
% of Flying Start children achieving Outcome 1 in all 4 areas within the Foundation Phase Compact on exit from childcare settings age	50.0	45.0
% of pupils who achieve the Core Subject Indicator at Key Stage 2	90.2	88.3
% of overall (half day sessions) pupil attendance in primary school	94.3	94.0
% of pupils who achieve the Level 1 threshold	95.0	90.9
% of pupils who achieve the Level 2 threshold (English/Welsh & maths)	42.4	42.7
% of FSM eligible pupils who achieve the L2 threshold (English/Welsh & maths)	23.5	23.8
% of overall (half day sessions) pupil attendance in secondary school	93.0	92.5
% of pupils looked after who achieve the L2 inclusive (English/Welsh & maths)	9.1	12.5

Chief Officer: Social Services

Lead Member

Strategic Focus

Lisa Curtis-Jones

Councillor David Hughes / Councillor Chris Davies

Improving Wellbeing

Background

Under the 'Living Well Objective' our priorities for 2018/19 were:

- Safeguarding children and adults who are at risk of harm;
- Tackling adverse childhood experiences and developing community resilience;
- Promoting health behaviours and increased levels of physical activity;
- Promote good emotional wellbeing and improved mental health;
- Provide clear and accessible information and advice; and
- Services that provide people with the ability to live in their own home.

These objectives focus on early intervention and prevention, which is an area we wanted to improve on and continue to build on in the future. We want to help people to achieve a higher level of well-being; helping them to help themselves, to make better choices and access different types of support.

Objectives:

People are empowered to live independently within their communities, where they are safe and enjoy good physical and mental health

Our evaluation says this outcome is:**Adequate**

In Merthyr Tydfil the annual judgement for outcomes is Adequate. There has been consistency in our performance across the key PI's, but there is still room for improvement.

Social Services continue to work alongside colleagues across the Council and in partnership with others to deliver effective services to a wide range of people. As part of this the Tackling Poverty Strategic Group and Tackling Poverty Board was established within the last eighteen months. Working with colleagues we undertook a review of our 'Team around the Family' which is now helping to develop an 'Early Help Hub'. An operational group has now been established to focus on Early Intervention and Prevention and to look to work together across the council on this agenda. Prevention and Early Intervention is key to sustaining services in the longer term.

Last year we had the introduction of the 'Edge of Care' grant which we used effectively to support children who are in crisis and need extra support. Further reviews of this service have been completed in 2018/19 with a view to services being changed moving forward to enable us to offer support at an earlier opportunity. In some circumstances children have required to be looked after but we work hard to match them to the most appropriate placement and are given the right support early on.

This year there has been lots of positive work undertaken in Social Services. We continue to support adults within their own home and react promptly to safeguarding concerns for both children and adults. Demands within the service have increased with pressures being seen on both Adult and Children Services due to high demand with packages of care for people leaving hospital and requiring support to live in the community, and with an increase in our numbers of Children being looked after. This has put huge pressures on us in respect of budgets. However, Safeguarding Adults and Children will always be our priority.

There have been two CIW inspections this year, with Children Services being inspected in April 2018 and the Mental Health Service being inspected in March 2018. The Wales Audit Office also audited 'Safeguarding' during the year. There will always be areas we can learn from but overall the feedback has been positive, which I feel is a major achievement when you consider the budget position and increasing demands for our service.

Table 4[Performance Key](#)

% of adult protection enquiries completed within 7 days		
% of people that received the right information or advice when they needed it		
% of adults who completed a period of reablement and have no package of care		
% of children supported to remain living within their family		
% of children looked after who have experienced one or more changes of school which were not due to transitional arrangements		
Number of visits to local authority sport and leisure centres per 1,000	7,808	7,276
The subjective wellbeing score of participants engaged in Active Merthyr projects (Start / End) ²	n/a	Start: 3.52 End: 3.79

¹ There is no comparable information to the other Welsh local authorities for the social care measures, as this information has not been published to date.

²Based on the Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (0-5) where 0 is low wellbeing and 5 is high wellbeing.

Chief Officer: Community Regeneration

Alyn Owen

Lead Member

Councillor Geraint Thomas

Strategic Focus

Developing the environment and infrastructure for business to flourish

Background

Following a reflection/refocusing activity which took place at the end of 2017/18 and using lessons learned through the first year of delivery; the Working Life theme within the Corporate Wellbeing Plan was broadened and enhanced. The refocused wellbeing objective offered opportunities for a more inclusive approach to be taken around the wider work which supports the improvement of skills and the environment and infrastructure for business to flourish.

Work undertaken during 2018-19 sought to better integrate the wide range of activities undertaken which had a strategic focus on the economy and infrastructure, and aimed to improve the economic position in Merthyr Tydfil through supporting business development (in particular targeted development of the tourism and retail economy sectors).

When looking at the Council's response in relation to the labour market and skills work, our aims were to embed a collaborative culture to tackling unemployment and to offer more co-ordinated programmes and interventions to support adults and young people (16 plus) in developing their skills for employment, self-employment or volunteering opportunities.

Objectives:

People feel supported to develop the skills required to meet the needs of businesses, with a developing; safe infrastructure which makes Merthyr Tydfil an attractive destination

Our evaluation says this well-being theme is:**Adequate**

Employment statistics for Merthyr Tydfil show the County Borough show a slight decrease during 2018-19; with the gross weekly pay for full-time workers in Merthyr Tydfil (£440.60) remaining below the Welsh average (£518.60). Though a slight increase in the percentage of young people not in education, employment or training was noted, the figure of 1.3% recorded for Merthyr Tydfil in 2018-19 still fell below the Welsh average (1.6%) for the same period.

Continued progress has been made to link targeted employment opportunities for economically inactive residents to new employment growth in the County Borough; this has continued to help develop the local work force. The work undertaken in 2018-19 contributed to an overall reduction in the percentage of working age people with no qualifications with data demonstrating a decrease of 2% which accumulates to an overall figure of 14.1% for 2018-19.

Progress was made to continue to better connect the critical service areas that impact on the supply and demand side of the local economy. Creating targeted pathways for local residents to gain skills to take advantage of new employment opportunities has created a missing link between the demand and supply in Merthyr Tydfil (e.g.) when Trago Mills opened their store in Merthyr Tydfil in April 2018, the majority of jobs advertised were secured by local people.

In terms of visitor figures; Merthyr Tydfil benefited from an increase of 41.6% in our annual visitors in 2018 which equates to 1.79m people visiting the County Borough. The economic impact of this large figure amounts to £1,000,750 being spent in the local economy; a 35.4% increase compared to 2017.

Table 5[Performance Key](#)

Key Performance Indicators	2017/18	2018/19
% of working age population in employment (Year ending Mar 2018)	74	72.2
% of working age population who are qualified to NVQ level 2 and above	66.2	57.4
% of population with no qualification	16.4	14.1
% of 16-18 year olds not in education, employment or training	1.0	1.3
Number of business births	255	220
Number of business deaths	165	190
% of participants in employment upon leaving the EU funded programmes	12.8	23

% of participants who gain a qualification on completion of an 'out of work' training programme	28.4	22
% of participants who gain a qualification on completion of an 'in work' training programme	81.9	87

Chief Officer: Neighbourhood Services

Lead Member

Strategic Focus

Judith Jones

Councillor Kevin Gibbs / Councillor David Hughes

Waste

Background

A healthy natural environment and countryside provides multiple benefits for people and wildlife from improved air, water and land quality, habitat protection and enhanced biodiversity to beneficial implications for physical and mental health. Therefore, the focus of this wellbeing objective is the work we do with our communities to protect, enhance and promote the environment and countryside. The Environmental Well-being objective is:

- Communities protect, enhance and promote our environment and countryside

How we act toward the environment and countryside will be a critical factor of a sustainable future in Merthyr Tydfil because the benefits of improving our environment will be felt across all of our wellbeing objectives.

The priority is to work towards achieving the national vision of Wales becoming a Zero Waste country by 2050 and taking steps to ensure the Welsh public sector becomes carbon neutral by 2030.

This wellbeing objective offers a holistic and sustainable approach to meeting the environmental wellbeing needs in Merthyr Tydfil.

Objectives:

Communities protect, enhance and promote our environment and countryside

Our evaluation says this well-being theme is:**Adequate**

The quality of the local environment is important to people. For 2018/19 the outcomes for the Environmental Wellbeing Objective are considered to be adequate. There are some evidenced examples of good outcomes for the community in Fly-tipping, Parks department, Street Cleansing and Waste. However, on the whole, due to the year on year reduction in resources and budgets for the front line services, the outcomes for the community are considered to be adequate in that the services provided but are limited and are often re-active rather than preventative due to limited resources.

The amount of waste recycled, reused and composted by residents fell slightly, but still exceeded the Welsh Government's target. Furthermore, having our own Waste transfer station allows us to treat materials and sustain the best possible market price for our recycling. It also allows us to store high volumes of tonnages so in instances of haulage failure it does not impact on the residents of Merthyr Tydfil. We have also been recognised nationally by receiving an award for our baled aluminium cans.

Over the period of 2018/19 in Merthyr Tydfil, the length of time taken to clear fly-tipping has remained very positive. Merthyr Tydfil had successfully cleared 100 per cent of all fly tipping incidents that were reported within 5 days between 2016/17 and 2017/18. With the introduction of the new fly tipping measure in 2018/19, Merthyr Tydfil is now ranked second in Wales taking an average of 0.72 days to clear all reported fly-tipping.

There has been a slight decline in the cleanliness of our highways in 2018-19 which was expected as a result of a reduction in resources. In addition, the total carbon dioxide emission from energy consumed by Council buildings has reduced from 15808 in 2016 to 6480. Whilst good improvement has been made in this area, it is recognised that further work needs to be done to ensure that our buildings are as energy efficient as possible.

Table 6[Performance Key](#)

Average number of working days taken to clear fly-tipping incidents	n/a	0.72
% of highways inspected of a high or acceptable standard of cleanliness	97.2	96.6
% of municipal waste reused, recycled, or composted ³	62.74	61.59
Kilograms of residual waste generated per person ³	n/a	197
Total carbon dioxide emissions from energy consumed by Council buildings	11758	6480

³ Local data provided – this data will not be verified by Waste Data Flow (WDF) until approximately October 2019

Number of Priority Open Spaces (out of 23 Priority Open Spaces) that meet or exceed the quality standard: Healthy, Safe and Secure.	6	8
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The following contains information that will help you to understand the analysis of our progress, particularly in relation to our priority areas.

Each priority area has an associated outcome, which describe the benefits we aim to deliver for our communities. An outcome is not in itself measureable, so in order to be accountable and to assess whether we are achieving the desired benefits we use indicators and improvement activity. This enables the council to quantify achievement and understand its impact on outcomes.

Current Position

Our indicators are evaluated based on our ranked position when compared to the other welsh local authorities. The purpose of using comparative data is to enable us to understand our relative performance across Wales.

By default, the status colour for each measure relates to our ranked position (the quartile range) within Wales. In some cases we are unable to compare that measure with other local authorities in Wales. In these instances the indicators are compared against Local Authority targets.

Table 11 indicator status definitions

Performance definition	Rank	Status
The current position is excellent	1-6	Excellent
The current position is good	7-11	Good
The current position is adequate	12-16	Adequate
The current position is unsatisfactory	17-22	Unsatisfactory
There is no comparable information or only local data	Not applicable	

Descriptor for each status

EXCELLENT	Very strong, sustained performance and practice
GOOD	Strong features, although minor aspects may require improvement
ADEQUATE and needs improvement	Strengths outweigh weaknesses, but important aspects require improvement
UNSATISFACTORY and needs urgent improvement	Important weaknesses outweigh strengths

Steps taken to achieve the 7 well-being goals

As a public body the Council must take all necessary steps to demonstrate its contribution to achieving all seven of the well-being goals. Over the last 12 months there has been an array of services and activities that support improving the well-being of our communities. The way in which we demonstrate the impact of this work requires a mixed-methods approach, i.e. quantitative and qualitative data.

This section of the report utilises case studies to demonstrate how we are working towards to the 7 well-being goals. Qualitative data can elicit a rich account of the complexities involved in supporting well-being and provides a rich understanding of the context within which our services exist.

The data captured by the case studies uses the Outcome STAR⁴ approach to demonstrate the positive outcomes for individuals and communities.

What is included in this section?

There is a selection of case studies; each one assessed for their contribution to the 7 well-being goals based on the official descriptors as outlined in the Wellbeing and Future Generations (WFG) Act. A case study that impacts on a well-being goal will keep that goal coloured, and the other goals grey scaled out.

In addition, when producing the case study consideration has been given to how officers and partners have used the sustainable development principle (the five ways of working) when delivering the service/activity to the community. Again, where the subject of the case study can be seen to reflect how the five ways of working have been proved, the icon appears in full colour, where this isn't the case, the icon has been grey-scaled out.

⁴ STAR, is any acronym for Situation, Task, Action and Result

Steps to achieve wellbeing...

Case Study: Rhydyicar 'Graffiti' Project

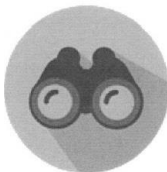
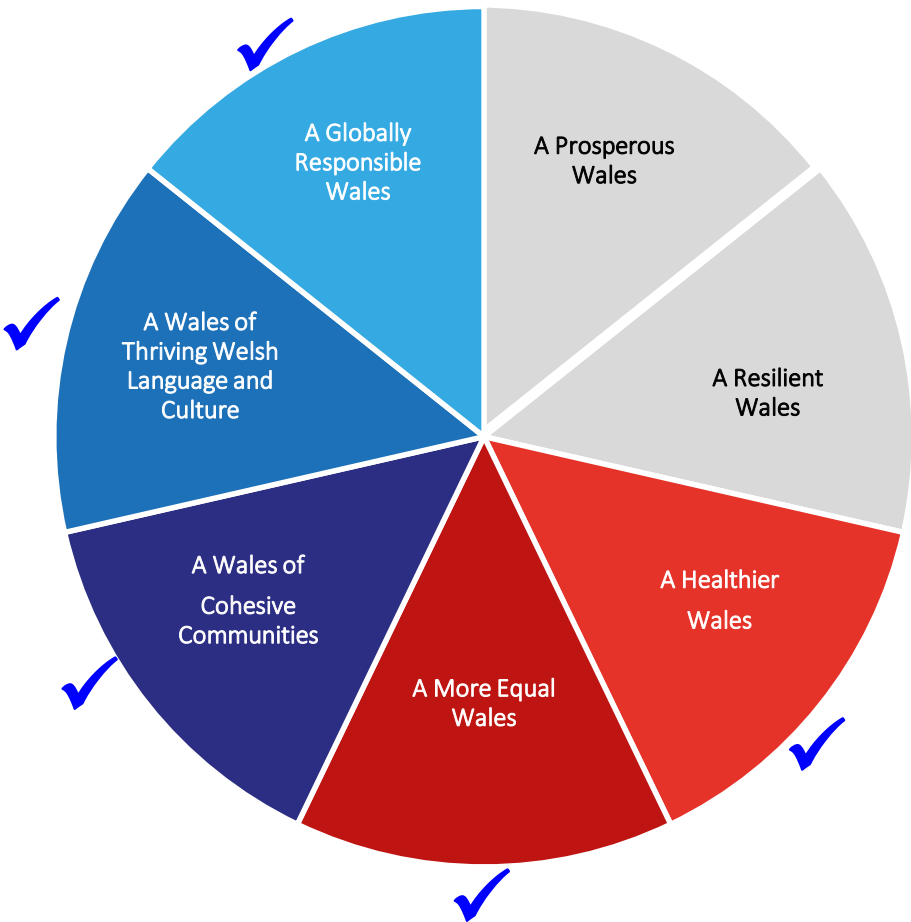
Over the summer of 2018; the Rhydyicar Skate Park in Merthyr Tydfil had been vandalised and sprayed with a significant amount of racist and offensive graffiti. This behaviour continued into the autumn; with graffiti consisting very offensive symbols and writing affecting not just the users of the Skate Park but also of the surrounding area.

The standard response to such incidents would be to paint over the graffiti as soon as possible. However, the Cwm Taf Community Safety Partnership sought to take a longer-term solution. This solution would aim to educate young people about offensive graffiti and symbols before carrying out work that would erase the offensive material and make Merthyr Tydfil Skate Park stand out for the right reasons.



Rhydyicar Skate Park – before the project

In developing a response to this issue, Merthyr Tydfil Council's Community Safety Team Leader worked with a professional graffiti artist and officers from both Cwm Taf Youth Offending Service and the Council's Youth Services' team. The project team worked with 53 young people that were regular users of the Skate Park and designs were generated by these young people. The completed project has transformed the site, and the young people responsible are proud of the changes they've introduced and have taken ownership of the Skate Park.



Long-term



Prevention



Integration



Involvement



Collaboration

Steps to achieve wellbeing...

Case Study: Merthyr Tri Club

'C' had recently moved back to the Merthyr Tydfil area after years of living away. 'C' wanted to get involved with a team sport to improve her fitness; and also wanted to use sport as a way to meet people and build a social life. To find out more about what was available locally; 'C' contacted Active Merthyr Tydfil via [Facebook](#).

The Active Merthyr Tydfil team were quick to respond and contacted 'C', they found out more about what sports she was interested in, before sending her information on all relevant clubs linked to the things she highlighted. 'C' had recently completed her first triathlon, so found the information she received around this to be particularly interesting.

Following an introduction arranged by staff at Active Merthyr Tydfil; 'C' met with Merthyr Tri Club and couldn't wait to become more involved. Timing had it that the club were relaunching and trying to grow the membership base, and 'C' was more than happy to give some time and help.

As a web developer and graphic designer, 'C' was able to build a website for the club and create their marketing materials; she also went on to manage the social media channels and has since built an online booking and payment system for members.

"Quite unbelievably, I am training to be a Level 1 triathlon coach so I can be more involved with the coaching side - something I would never have even considered before being involved with the club. As a team we are going from strength to strength. We are now an affiliated British Triathlon club for both juniors and adults, we have about 70 members, we run several weekly sessions, have held two large events in Merthyr and plan to have lots more next year. I am so delighted to be a part of Merthyr Tri Club and being a part of something so positive and rewarding has really changed my outlook.

I would never have believed that in those seven months since I sent that Facebook message, I would be doing what we are doing now, especially training to be a coach. My fiancé is also now the secretary and we have made friends for life through the club. We are very grateful for everything and we owe that to the Active Merthyr team"



Steps to achieve wellbeing...

Case Study: 'Food and Fun' Club

Poverty is an issue which affects the South Wales Valleys and the people in Merthyr Tydfil. Merthyr Tydfil Council is developing an Anti-Poverty Strategy to support communities across the County Borough to address the impact of poverty. This Strategy's aim is to help minimise the impact of poverty on communities and to ensure people are equipped to cope with the challenges they face terms of the impact that poverty can have on health, education, job prospects and community involvement.

To support these aims, the 'Food and Fun' project was collaboratively developed by Goitre Prima School; the Council's Schools Catering Department; Active Merthyr Tydfil and the local Public Health Team. The desired outcomes of the project were that children would receive nutritious food on a basis; and also engage in activities supporting behaviour changes around eating habits and physical activity.

A physical activity programme was delivered by offering a range of different experiences within fun engaging sessions which – these activities were aligned to what is on offer in the local community.

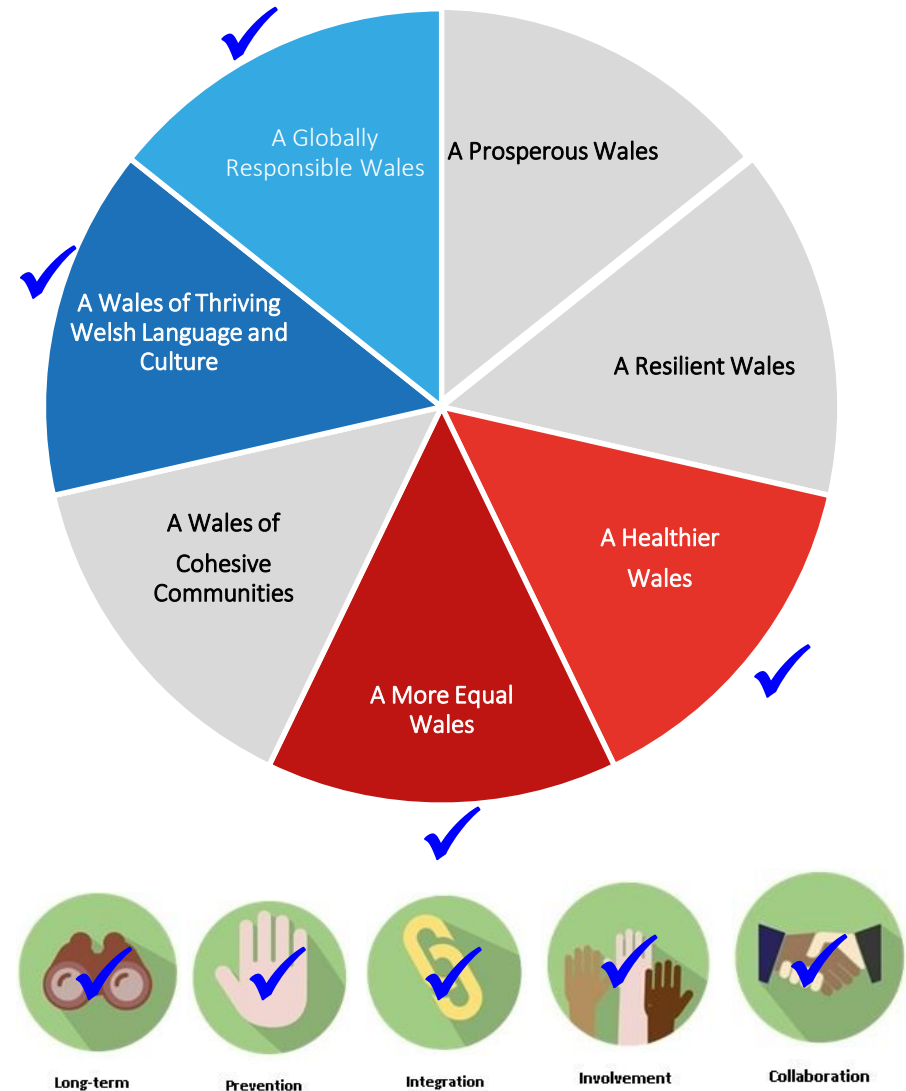
Nutrition sessions provided the children taking part with enjoyable opportunities to learn about healthy eating; these sessions were delivered by school staff that had been upskilled to deliver nutrition activities by dieticians from the local Public Health team.

On completion of the project; outcomes included the children who had attended the session and brought packed lunches to school now having fruit as part of that lunch. Physical activity levels also saw an increase in both curricular and extra-curricular sessions. Additionally, school staff saw a improvement in relationships between those who had taken part.

Prior to the summer break, Pupil 'A' (aged 4) would not have attended Breakfast Club – having taken part in Food and Fun; this is now something she thoroughly enjoys

Pupil 'B' (aged 5) really enjoyed the sporting aspects of the project, especially wheelchair basketball. He's now a Healthy Eating Monitor and regularly speaks with children and staff about the food we eat.

Pupil 'C' (aged 4) enjoyed the outdoor aspects of the project, and loved visiting the local park to play Foot Golf. She tells us she's learned a lot about healthy eating and tries to make sure she keeps a healthy diet



Steps to achieve wellbeing...

Case Study: Fruit Tree Grafting

Plants and horticulture help heal and boost people’s fitness and mental health. People suffering all levels of physical and mental ailments can be helped and sometimes rehabilitated through growing plants and gardening. The scents, sights and textures of gardens, as well as the act of gardening itself can re-awaken memories and reignite stifled energies and abilities.

Horticultural skills are at a premium within the local communities in Merthyr Tydfil. The resource established within the walled garden and greenhouses at Cyfarthfa Park consist of a recently planted orchard of old Welsh heritage fruit varieties and horticultural facility. The resources provide an opportunity to teach people new horticultural skills and to provide some practical experience to participants.

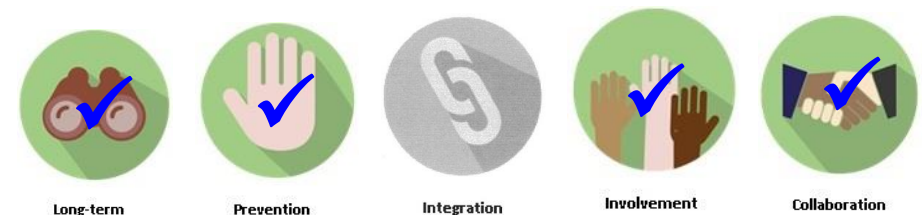
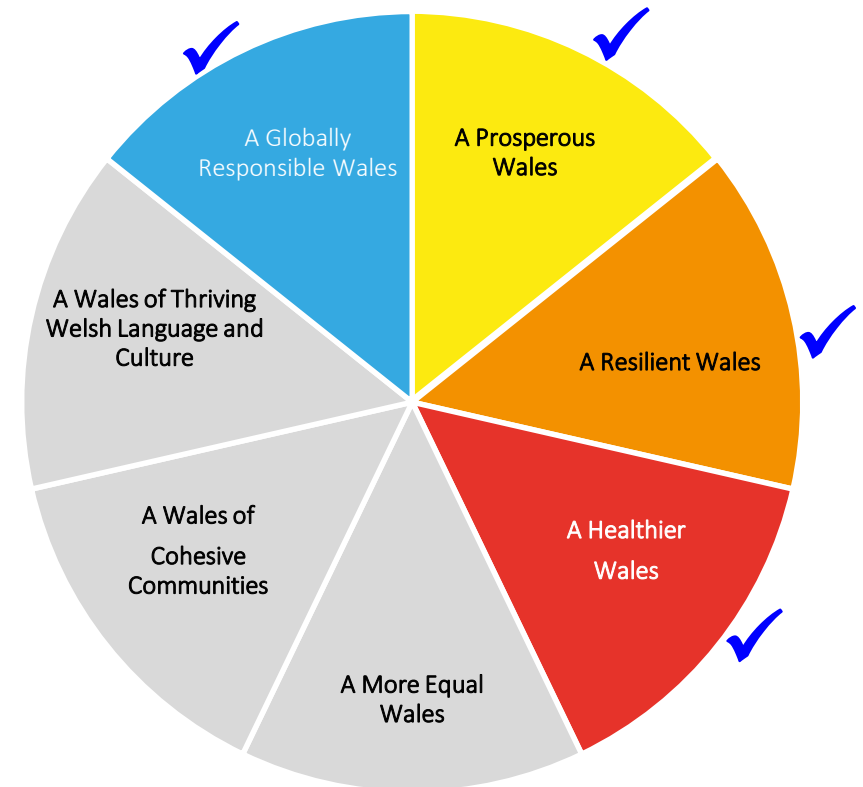
Merthyr Tydfil CBC’s Countryside team often make use of ‘in-house’ horticultural qualifications and experience to enable participants to learn how to graft fruit trees through the process of apple grafting. Skills are shared, discussion about history; techniques and the science behind the process takes place.

For people taking part in the training; the activities they complete often leaves participants with increased confidence that they have the skills to carry out this process in future. Additionally, by sustaining the skills developed, we increase our chances of maintaining a stock of future genetic material for generations to come. The activities not only support skills development, but also provide pollen and food to improve biodiversity.

“The course helped me to have a sense of purpose, and improved my wellbeing. It’s stimulated me to further research the science behind grafting and gave me an opportunity to practice my grafting skills”



For participants who access training via this facility; they are able to take the trees home with them and ‘grow them on’. All trees retained are then planted out on open spaces – this fulfils part of the Council’s Action Plan supporting delivery of its Open Space Strategy.



Steps to achieve wellbeing...

Case Study: Development of the Safer Communities Wales 'App'

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Councils is a key partner within the Cwm Taf Community Safety Partnership. At the start of 2018, the Partnership had only been able to secure anecdotal data about drug litter-related issues. On a local level, it had been noted that the perception of drug use in Merthyr Tydfil was high among some of the communities within Merthyr Tydfil County Borough.

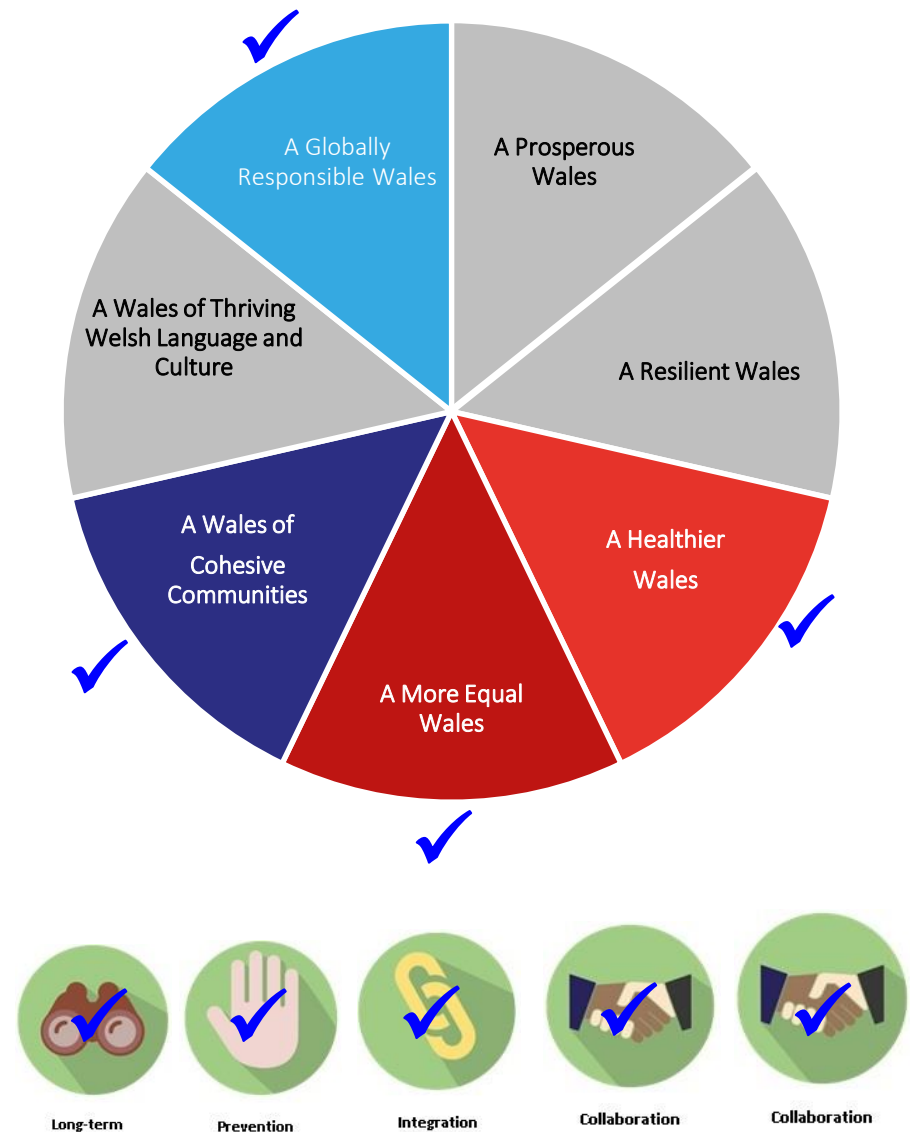
Through conversations with the local community and following the reviewing of social media posts on platforms such as Facebook, the issue of discarded drug litter and the risks this could pose to public safety was recorded.

In order to take the first step in addressing the issues identified, the Council's Community Safety team set out to design an 'app' which would allow local people to report where drug litter/paraphernalia had been found across the County Borough. The database supporting the 'app' has been developed to show the location of the drug litter, and could be broken down into categories (e.g.) used and unused needles; nitrous oxide canisters, crack pipes and heroin cookers. The Council's Waste Services team and local substance Misuse agencies could then access the 'app', identify the new reports and arrange to pick up this drug litter; and remove the risk to the public.

Throughout its development stage, options and opportunities were identified and built in to the 'app' (e.g.) options were added to record homelessness, and in particular rough sleepers; this enabled to Council to better understand the scope and scale of this issue in Merthyr Tydfil.

The Safer Communities Wales 'App' is currently in restricted trials in Merthyr Tydfil; The Council's Team Leader for Community Safety, Ryan Evans, explained *"No-one in the UK is currently doing this. The first phase is collecting the intelligence – we usually rely on Police intelligence which gives us a small percentage of information. This new 'app' will allow us to collect local intelligence directly from our communities"*. The trial ended in August 2019.

Early findings of the trial show us that 96.7% of the drug litter reported has been safely collected within 24 hours. Throughout the trial, additional external partners have become involved in the reporting and response elements of the 'app' including Barod, Merthyr Valley Homes etc.



Steps to achieve wellbeing...

Case Study: 'Outdoor Spaces' Project

Merthyr Tydfil is well known for its' industrial past; however, the County Borough benefits from an abundance of countryside and green spaces. There is clear evidence that by accessing and using outdoor spaces, opportunities to improve both physical and mental wellbeing can be capitalised upon.

When undertaking joint planning activities, an Outdoor Spaces project was to be developed to open up opportunities for the public to become more aware of what Merthyr Tydfil has to offer. As part of this collaboratively designed project; six measured running and walking routes were marked out in the area to support usage of the trail network:

- Two opportunities along the Taff trail;
- Three opportunities in Taf Bargoed Park; and
- One opportunity in Cyfarthfa Park – this would link to the history of the park with a family walk.

The routes were aimed at walkers, runners, families and cyclists. Development led to new links being formed for Active Merthyr with partners such as the Rights of Way team; Cyfarthfa Park Museum; Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council's (MTCBC) Biodiversity team, Merthyr Park Wardens, and many outdoor community groups. The Council's Corporate Communications team supported the project by widely marketing activities and opportunities.



An officer from Cyfarthfa Museum stated *"I have had the pleasure of working alongside the Active Merthyr Tydfil team creating Geocaching activities in Cyfarthfa Park and an historical family trail around the woodlands. We have also worked together on their incredibly successful National Play Day events in August 2018. All of these projects and events have shown incredible diversity and a true collaborative approach and most importantly get members of the community in the borough of Merthyr Tydfil active"*.

Through the project, families now have more opportunities and a better awareness of what is on their doorsteps to get physically active outdoors; and the Active Merthyr team has established important partnership links with key departments and groups throughout Merthyr.



Steps to achieve wellbeing...

Case Study: Music Services in Merthyr Tydfil

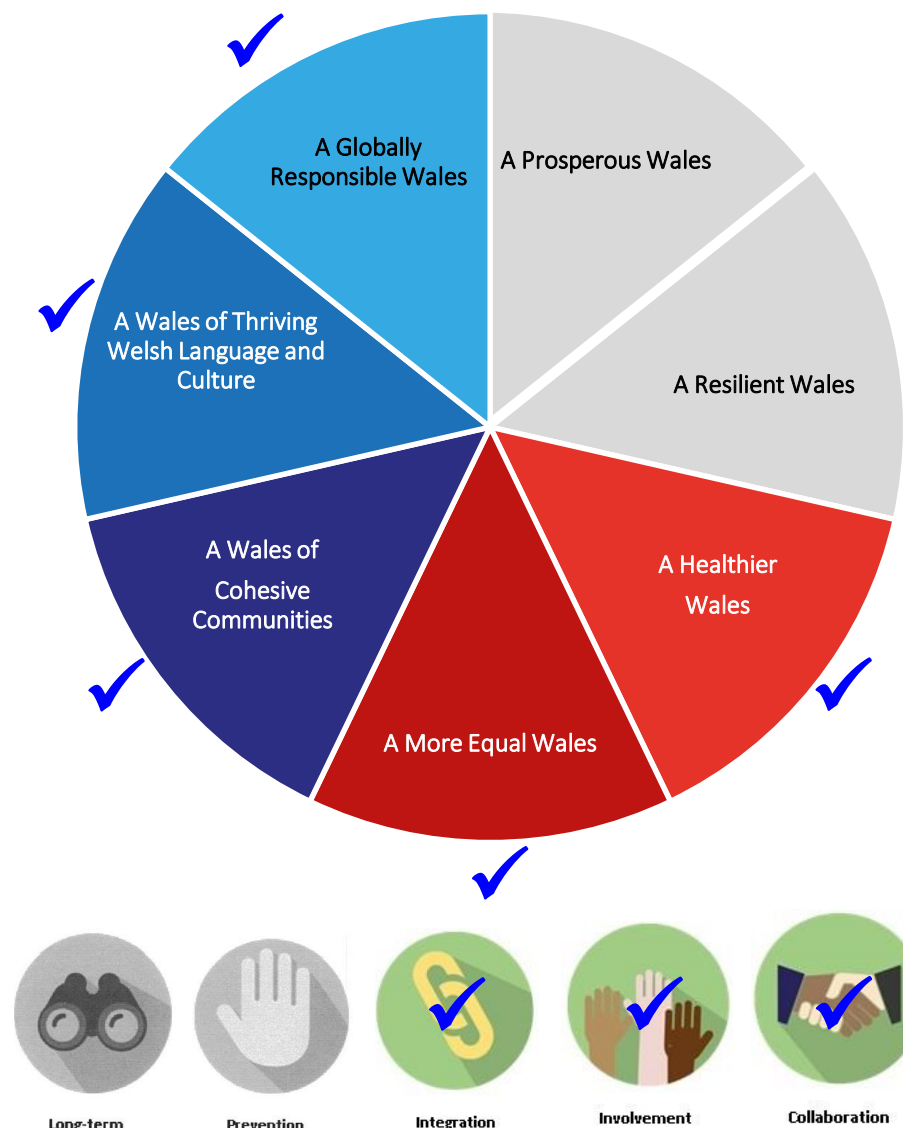
The number of young people taking part in music lessons within a school environment had dwindled across the county borough. The Council identified a need to create a bridge between schools and the Council in order to help turn this around; so the Merthyr Tydfil Music Service was established.

The aim of the service was to reignite the musical spark within young people attending the County Borough’s schools and college. The Service offers tuition in strings; woodwind; brass; percussion; guitar; harp; piano and singing. It delivers the music lessons to all group sizes ranging from individuals and small groups to whole class ensemble tuition (WCET).

The Service strives to be inclusive; ensuring music is available to all and provides high quality music tuition to students of all ages and abilities in a variety of educational settings inspiring young people from Merthyr Tydfil to make music together whilst having fun creating tomorrow’s musicians today.

Our pupils have achieved significant standards in musical excellence. The four counties of Merthyr Tydfil, Bridgend, Caerphilly and Rhondda Cynon Taf organise the Four Counties Youth Music ensembles meeting a few times a year. For the academic year 2018/2019, a dozen young Merthyr Tydfil musicians were successful in gaining places in the Four Counties Youth Orchestra; Wind-band and Brass Band.

Advanced musicians are eligible to apply for audition for membership of the National Youth Arts Wales Ensembles and as a result of the 2018/2019 auditions, one of our young people has achieved an offer for a place in the National Youth Choir of Wales while another is on the reserve list for membership of the National Youth Wind Orchestra of Wales, this same young musician has been awarded an unconditional place to study for a Music degree at the Royal Welsh College Of Music and Drama from September 2019.



Steps to achieve wellbeing...

Case Study: Tackling Period Poverty in Merthyr Tydfil

Female hygiene products are a necessity; not a choice. Period poverty is an issue which can affect women and girls across the length and breadth of the United Kingdom; and can have a particular impact on areas which face higher levels of poverty such as the South Wales Valleys. The impact of not being able to afford or access sanitary products include school girls having to miss schools; facing a barrier to accessing education and learning opportunities which they, themselves, are unable to control.

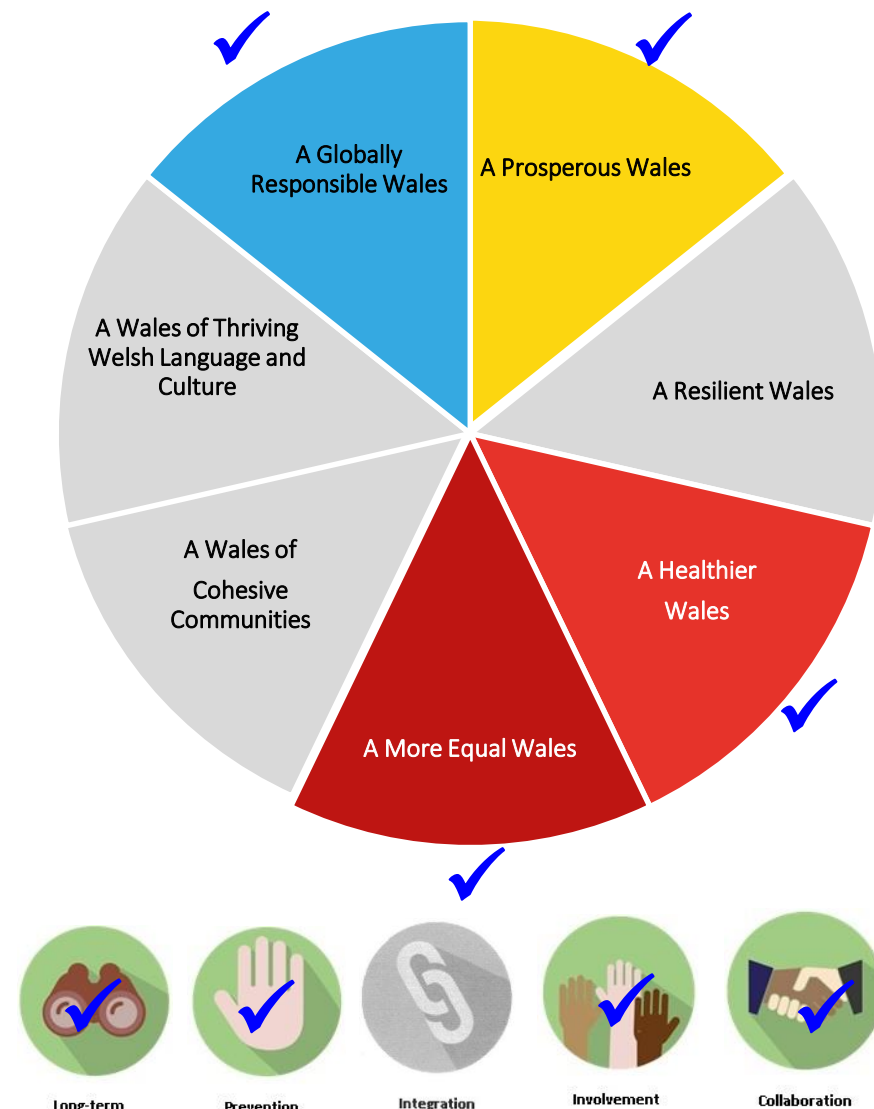
To address this issue, Welsh Government announced the introduction of the 'Period Dignity Grant for Schools' scheme in March 2018. A subsequent motion of Motion was presented at the MTCBC's Full Council meeting on 4th April 2019.

MERTHYR TYDFIL COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL			
NOTICE OF MOTION			
COMMITTEE	FULL COUNCIL	DATE	
DATE RECEIVED	07/03/2018	SUBMITTED BY	Cllr Chris Barry
Merthyr Tydfil CBC notes that:			
Female hygiene products are a necessity, not a choice.			
Council commends the recent RCTCBC initiative to provide free sanitary products in all of their schools in a bid to stamp out period poverty			
Council accepts the need to help women and school girls who cannot currently access or afford sanitary products and will therefore take necessary action to provide free sanitary products in schools, as a first practical step to make period poverty and stigma a thing of the past.*			

At this Full Council meeting; Councillors unanimously accepted the need to help women and school girls who could not access or afford sanitary products and agreed to take the necessary action to provide free sanitary products in schools as a first practical step to make period poverty and stigma a thing of the past.

Following this Full Council meeting; funding was secured from Welsh Government to update sanitary equipment and toilet facilities in schools (where needed). A questionnaire was issued in both primary and secondary schools to secure the views of young women in respect of periods. Findings of this activity identified people responding felt having free products which could be independently accessed by individuals would remove the embarrassment of having to ask someone for them.

The result of this consultation is that all schools in Merthyr Tydfil with pupils aged 9 years and above will now provide a range of free sanitary products for their female learners that can be independently accessed; and that schools are now equipped with adequate disposal facilities.



Steps to achieve wellbeing...

Case Study: *The Aspire Apprenticeship Programme*

'S' was a 19-year old student attending College that was reaching the end of her learning experience and was trying to look at options for the next step she should take on the career ladder.

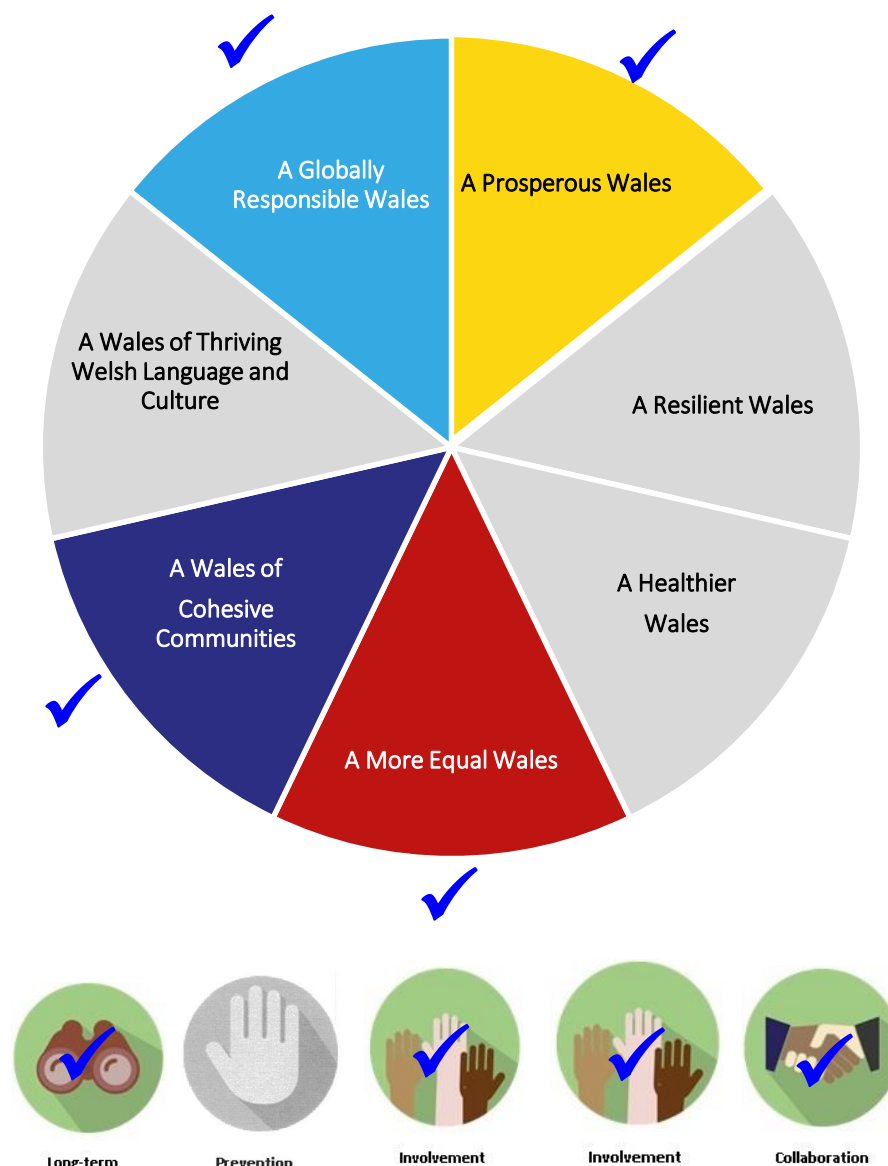
'S' had considered accessing a university place; but was also interested in finding out more about apprenticeships and had begun to explore apprenticeships but felt that this wasn't really going anywhere. It was at this stage that 'S' heard about the Aspire programme.

The Aspire Shared Apprenticeship Programme is a partnership project which supports individuals to secure 2-3 year apprenticeship placements with local employers. The programme is delivered in partnership with Welsh Government; Tydfil Training; Pembrokeshire College and Blaenau Gwent County Borough council and aims to both tackle poverty and develop business growth. Placements are offered to people aged 16-24 years who possess 5 A-C grade GCSEs in STEM subjects (Science, Technology, English and Mathematics).

"Taking this opportunity has had a positive impact on my life. I feel I'm actually an adult now with a proper job; and I can see myself working with this company for a long time – it's really great!"

'S' (19), Merthyr Tydfil

The Aspire project team met with 'S' and offered practical support which offered 'S' an apprenticeship opportunity with Teneka Walker, a manufacturing organisation which had recently set-up in Merthyr Tydfil. 'S' has already spent time with the maintenance team at the company; and is currently working with the robotics Team where she is developing her skills in programming the robots.



Steps to achieve wellbeing...

Case Study: Drystone Walling

Merthyr Common has several hundred metres of drystone walls that are in desperate need of repair. They act as both linear corridors and shelterbelts for grazing animals in incremental weather. Merthyr Tydfil Council has a duty to protect these features as part of the Nature Recovery Plan. Linear features often support a variety of plant and animals and have been identified as an important tool in addressing issues of ecological importance and habitat fragmentation, which themselves are a major factor in the decline and loss of species.

The Council’s Countryside Team worked with a local farmer from Merthyr Common in choosing a suitable area to repair the drystone walls to reconnect the linear features. Working with a specialist drystone waller; a project begins to reconstruct the wall. The project includes an element where volunteers are trained in the countryside skills related to drystone walling.

Community groups/volunteer groups/MTCBC staff invited to learn rural countryside skills that will empower them to take ownership of their environment. By engaging with the community/volunteer sector the aim of enriching/building new skills within these groups to undertake these works within their local environment can be achieved. In 2018-19; 30 metres of drystone walling was completed on Merthyr Common; with several people taking up the opportunity to learn these new skills.

SMcG, a volunteer taking part in the activity commented:

“It’s great that Merthyr Council are supporting traditional craftsmen and women and encouraging a new generation to learn about their work and try it for themselves. We were taught the basic techniques and quickly became reasonably competent to carry on ourselves, working at our own pace and carrying stones we were comfortable with.

The process is attractive and enjoyable to me in that it provides moderate physical exercise and poses a series of solvable problems (in the choice and siting of the next stone). It is also very calming, because as you focus on the task you tend to forget about anything else and just concentrate on the next section of wall. The glorious scenery of Merthyr Common provided a splendid backdrop and a feeling of connection with the people who had built the original wall, many years before. There was a great sense of teamwork and satisfaction at the progress we made and with the finished wall. The course has given me confidence and inspired me to undertake some dry stone walling projects in my own garden”.



Steps to achieve wellbeing...

Case Study: Clwb Dysgu Cymraeg Calfaria

Supported by the Council and in particular by the Cabinet Member for Community Regeneration and Public, Protection; **Clwb Dysgu Cymraeg Calfaria** was established in January 2019. The Club is a community Welsh class that has been set up in the village of Heolgerrig in Merthyr Tydfil. The *Clwb Dysgu Cymraeg Calfaria* class is ‘owned’ and run by the community. Posters have been produced and a dedicated page and group have been set up on Facebook to promote the classes across the County Borough.

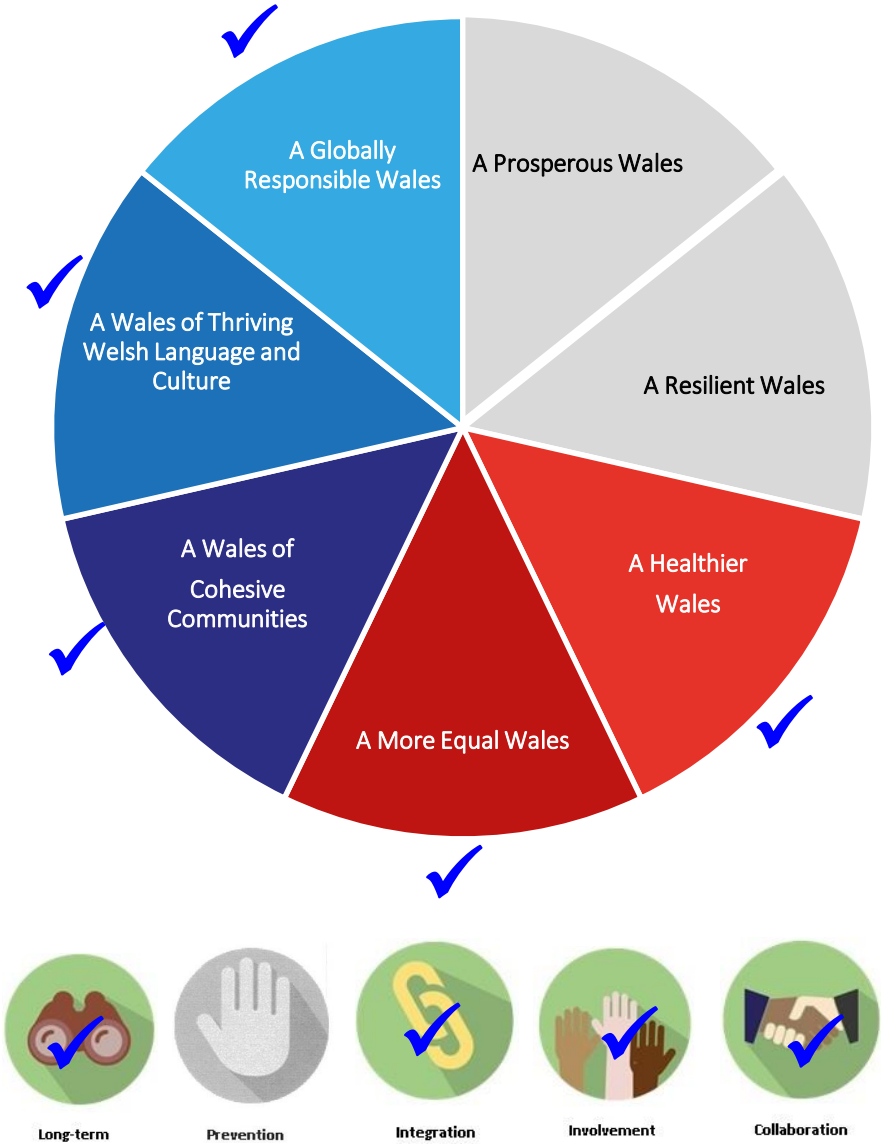
The class meets one evening a week and encourages the whole community to come along and learn, practice, improve or use their Welsh in a sociable and welcoming environment. This class is very informal and provides confidence for learners who wish to speak the language and progress further. The class has its own volunteer tutor who facilitates the classes and promotes awareness and understanding of the culture and history of the Welsh language locally and nationally.

The Council’s Cabinet Member for Community Regeneration and Public Protection attends the classes each week, whilst the Council’s Welsh Language Officer also regularly attends to support the Group. As part of social side of the club, the class attended the opening ceremony of the opening concert of the Urdd National Eisteddfod of Cardiff and the Vale.

As Clwb Dysgu Cymraeg Calfaria continues to grow it is hoped that more community members will attend classes that will support the increase of Welsh speakers in the County Borough, further promote Welsh heritage and culture and support the Council’s Welsh Language Promotional Strategy.



“Calfaria Chapel is the perfect meeting place as it’s right in the centre of the village,” he said. “This is a community class that’s very informal, yet extremely informative. People are able to chat in Welsh with friends, relatives and neighbours – and that’s a real confidence booster.”



Steps to achieve wellbeing...

Case Study:: *The 'Making Change' Project*

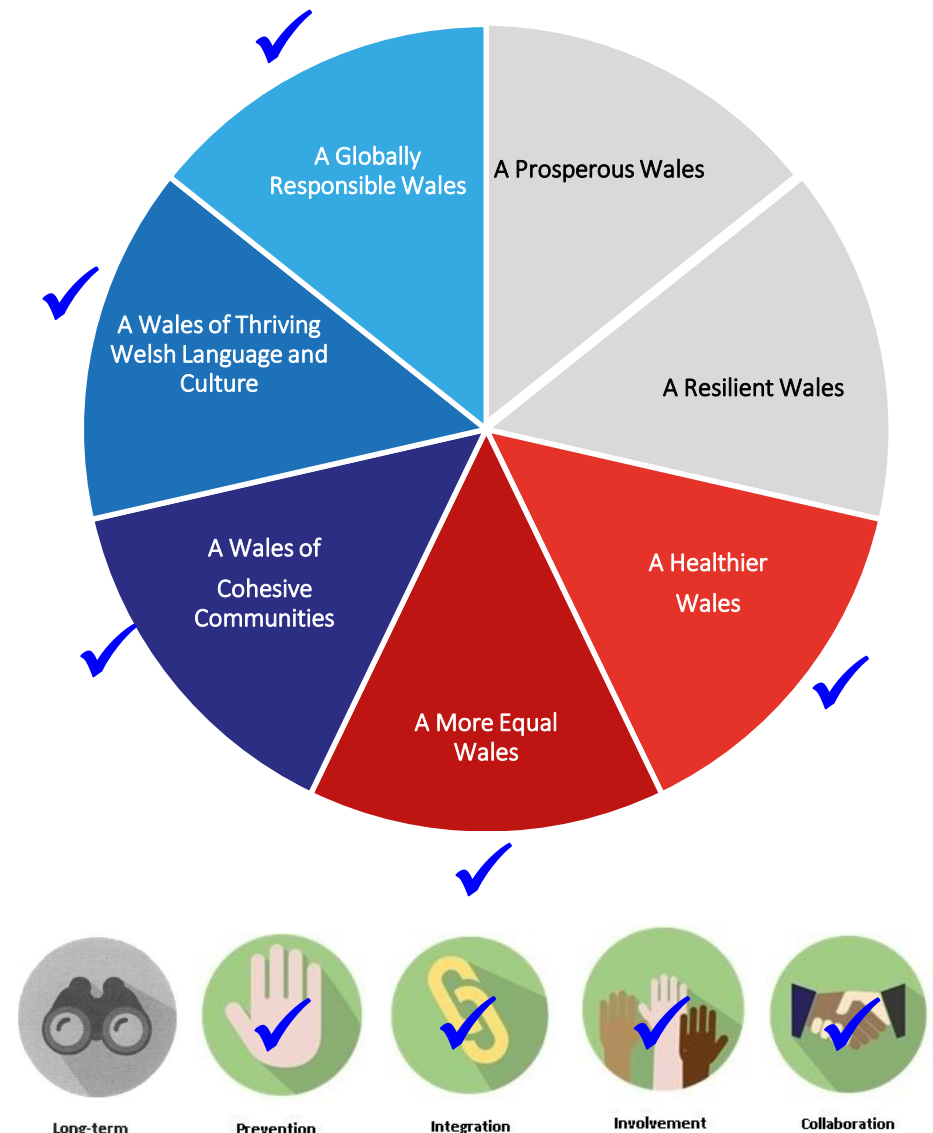
Some issues related to repeated negative behaviour being displayed by a number of young males that were attending the Willows Centre in the Plymouth ward of Merthyr Tydfil County Borough. Relationships between the boys in question and staff at the Centre and surrounding area were placed at risk and the Council's Youth Services team wanted to look at ways in which they could address the issues positively.

It was decided to work with key partners to develop a response to this: Safer Merthyr Tydfil using their positive relationship project, C Card Scheme with Public Health Wales, South Wales Police, and the Youth Offending team, who provided a workshop, support and advice.

These activities and the activity to support improvement in relationship culminated in a 'Stay Awake' project. This project was planned by the young people, who have increasingly displayed improved positive behaviour towards other members of the youth club and staff since the activity took place. As a result, relationships have improved significantly.

The impact of the approach and the change which has resulted were commented upon by a local PCSO. "Local Police had been receiving numerous reports from members of the public in relation to negative and anti-social behaviour of youths in the local area. During evenings, Police had to return to the same locations over and over to move the group of youths on; and we were having to issue anti-social behaviour referrals.

Since the youths have started attending the Willows and have been taking part in activities which they are helping to shape activities; Police have had a reduction in calls and anti-social behaviour referrals made have reduced. The youth club has built up positive relationships with the young people, this has resulted in them continuing to attend at youth and no longer causing problems in the local community".



Steps to achieve wellbeing...

Case Study:: *Mental Health DVD and Toolkit*

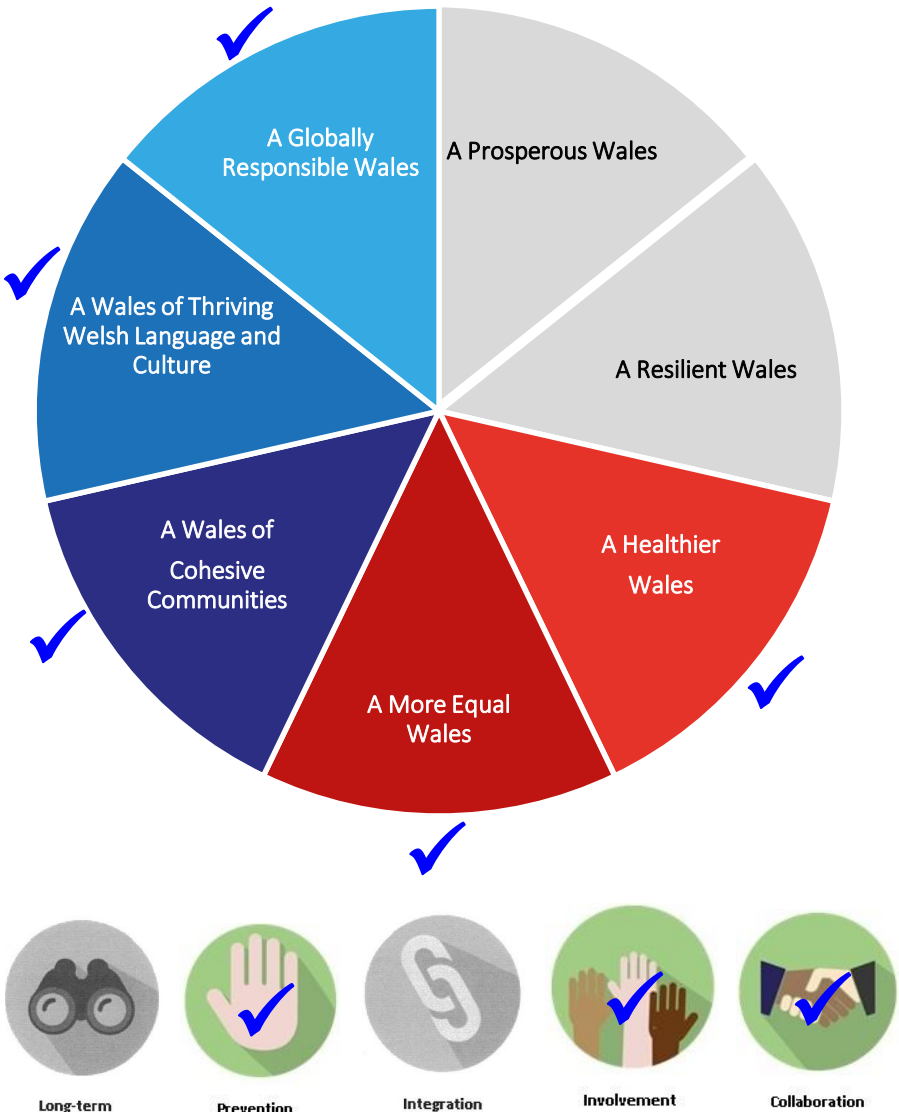
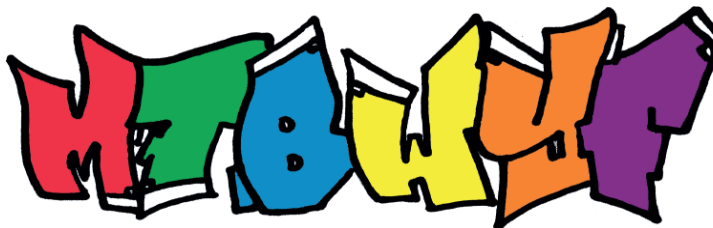
In 2018, NHS Digital published data that demonstrated that in the UK; 1 in 8 (12.8%) of children and young people have a least one mental health disorder. To ensure the voice of children and young people was helping to shape the response to this issue; Merthyr Tydfil Borough-Wide Youth Forum (MTBWYF) brought together a group of young people from a variety of different backgrounds and ran workshops to share information and gather views.

One young male (17 years) suffers from anxiety and has done so for the last 6 years. He has attended mindfulness classes and also continues to see a counsellor. During the first couple of sessions this young person had to step outside a couple of times and confided in a member of staff that he didn't know if he could attend anymore. Now ten sessions in this young person has changed immensely; he has written a health guide about anxiety that includes techniques to use. He smiles and laughs and has made some new friends, he talks openly about mental health and how he feels this project has helped him to move on. He still suffers from bouts of anxiety but he now keeps a journal about positive things that have happened to him.

A DVD resource has been produced by young people for young people; you can access this DVD by clicking [here](#).

The young person is also part of the group that are helping to design an Information Advice and Assistance website for young people in Merthyr Tydfil. At the end of the last meeting he told a member of staff he thoroughly enjoyed himself and it was the best meeting he had been to. This young person is now the lead for the group and in the last MTBWYF meeting he had an agenda item to feed back about the project.

This young person has come a long way in a short time; he and his mother feel that being part of the mental health project has been the main contribution to this. He has never hidden that he suffers from anxiety, but for him this project has enabled him to increase his self-esteem, confidence and feel good about himself.



Steps to achieve wellbeing...

Case Study:: Inspire to Achieve (I2A) Lead Working

'CM' had been diagnosed as having ADHD and this condition would often be the cause of challenging behaviour; particularly if SM did not take his medication on a daily basis. In order to address the issues CM was facing; he was referred to the I2A project so that they might access help to manage these behaviours, with a view to supporting him into a post-16 destination.

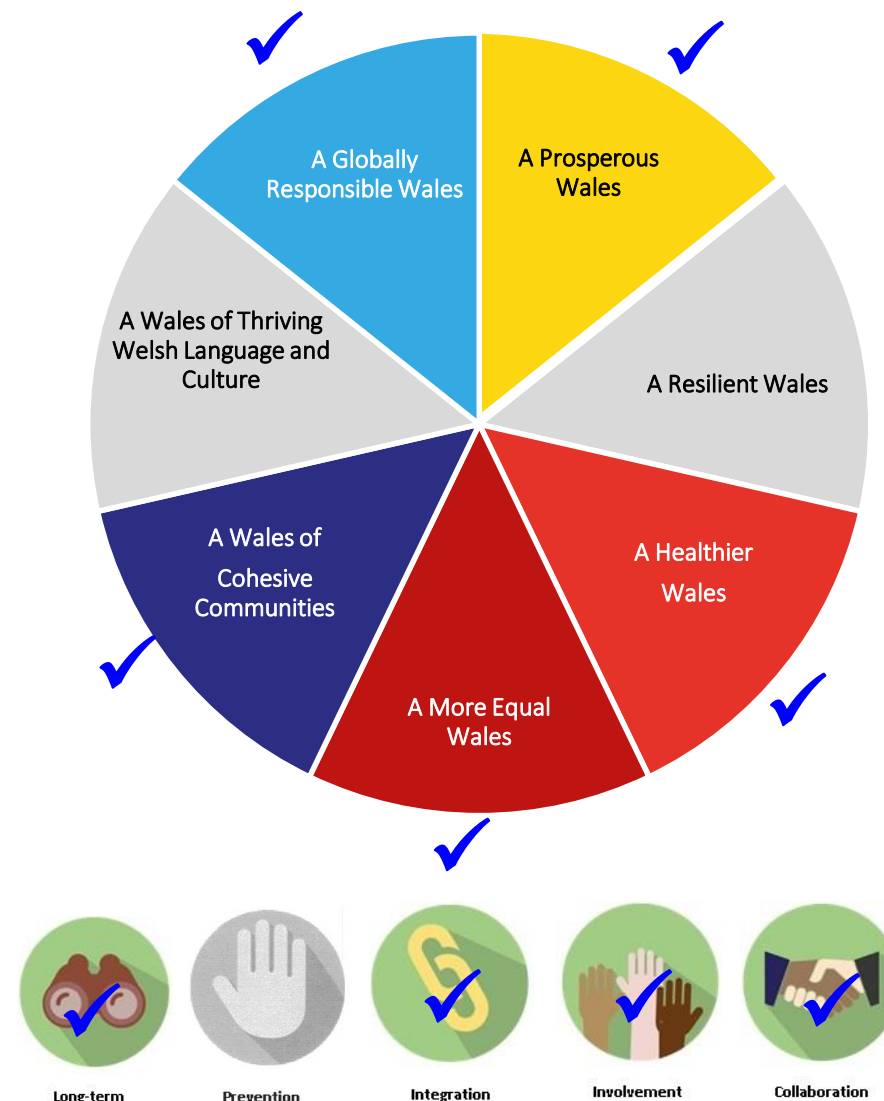


'CM' met with the I2A Lead Worker to discuss his needs, CM was keen to plan his post-16 destination, and applied for an Entry Level 1 course in construction at The College, Merthyr Tydfil. He was offered an interview which he was anxious to attend; CM was supported by the Lead Worker to attend this interview who also sat with him in case he needed support. CM felt a lot more comfortable at the interview knowing this support was on hand; he performed extremely well at interview and was offered a place on his chosen course at the end of the interview.

The Lead Worker continued to offer SM support during the Summer to prepare for college; they offered CM practical support on the completion of EMA forms and getting a birth certificate so that he could open a bank account. When CM broke up from school, he stopped taking his medication and this led to his behaviour becoming more challenging and erratic than it had previously been. The Lead Worker worked with both CM and his mother, stressing the importance of taking his medication, including explaining that this could affect his performance in college in September. CM started to medicate over the summer and managed it as part of his daily routine which led to his behaviour settling down.

CM enrolled in college and the Lead Worker accompanied him for moral support. CM was shown to his classroom and introduced to his tutors. CM felt confident to go in the classroom alone as he wanted to start his first college class independently without support; he felt a lot more comfortable getting used to his surroundings before his first official day in college.

CM has settled well at College and feels that he has the best support possible around him and has made friends on his course. CM is still taking his medication for his ADHD on a regular basis and now that he is in college he feels motivated to do well. CM is performing well in his classes and tutors have seen a lot of personal growth and independence since starting college.



Steps to achieve wellbeing...

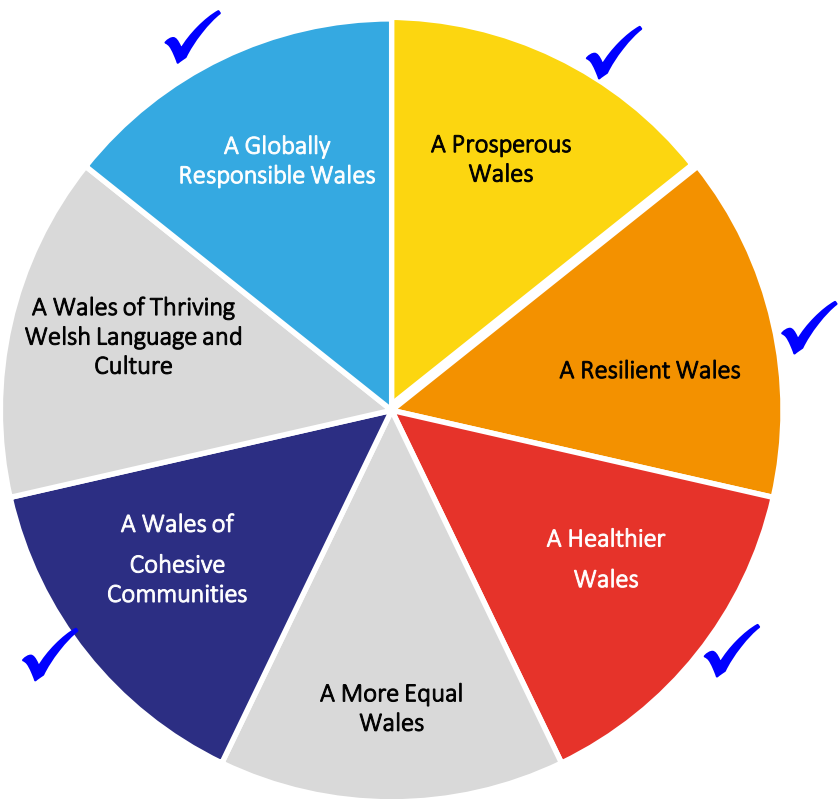
Case Study: Bee-keeping

Bees are probably the best-known pollinator in the UK. They play a vital role in our natural world, or ecosystem, by transferring pollen from one flower to another. Honey bees, wild and domestic, perform about 80% of all pollination worldwide and a single bee colony can pollinate 300 million flowers each day. Seventy of the top 100 food crops, which supply about 90% of the world’s nutrition, are pollinated by bees. One out of every three mouthfuls of our food depends on pollination taking place. However, honeybees are in crisis worldwide. Scientists acknowledge that bee numbers are in decline due to a variety of factors including pesticides, drought, habitat destruction, nutrition deficit, air pollution and climate change. In economic terms, honeybee pollination could be worth as much as £200m to the UK alone and \$170bn globally. However, no monetary value can be put on the contribution bees make to ecosystems around the world or on our relationship with them which goes back for thousands of years.

The Rural Development Programme’s project BEES (Breeding, Education, Environment and Skills) was set up to bring together bee keepers from across South East Wales in partnership with three Local Action Groups (LAGs); Cwm a Mynydd LAG, the Vale of Usk LAG and Rural Action Cwm Taf. This initiative looked to develop partnerships with private and social enterprises. The aim of this three year project is to breed honey queen bees that would enable all partners to carry on beekeeping if the queen died or left the hive. The Countryside team within Merthyr Tydfil CBC worked with the BEES project to deliver a variety of workshops across the community in order to help the understanding of both pollinators and what is involved in becoming a beekeeper.



Various events were set up to encourage new beekeepers in Merthyr Tydfil. Collaborative workshops were set up with Merthyr Tydfil Naturalists, Pollen8 and Royal Crescent Allotments to showcase the importance of both pollinators and bee keeping. Attendees were invited to a later event to try on bee suits and open up a live bee hive to see if they would like to become bee keepers. By working collaboratively with these groups, we have attracted eight new beekeepers within the Merthyr Tydfil Borough both young and old.



Steps to achieve wellbeing...

Case Study: Youth Support – Resilience Programme

Merthyr Tydfil CBC's Youth Support Team identified a need to support a group of young individuals who had similar needs and issues linked to feeling isolated and needing support to develop resilience-building skills. Working with young people, a programme was developed which would help them develop skills to manage both with things they were already dealing with at the time, or to prepare them for things they might face in the future. The programme covered issues such as anger management; confidence building; overcoming worries; personal hygiene; developing an understanding of anti-social behaviour; internet safety etc.

Delivering the programme condensed 70 hours of individual support into a targeted 7 hour-long sessions. The programme the team to address isolation as a presenting need through invaluable peer bonds being formed within the group. Running the group within the school allowed the Youth Services workers to increase its team presence within the school, and relationships with the staff were further strengthened; as was the team's key working relationship with the young people.

Venture Out worked with the group to give them a team building skills day. The young people chose the team building activity that they wanted to do - Gorge Walking. The activity was a success and as well as improving team building skills in the group; it increased their confidence, promoted positive experiences and friendship skills. The group were given certificates of their achievement for attending.

All 10 young people completed the programme and were presented with a certificate of achievement, a file of their work and tools to back up the intervention such as stress balls, diaries, and personal hygiene kits. Their parents were given a parents pack with guidance on each intervention to ensure that the message is furthered at home. Comments received from the young people on completion of the programme included:

"Anger management was most important to me as it helped me to learn ways to calm down"

"Everything I did on the programme helped as it gave me a different view on anger management; hygiene and stuff"

When asked how they felt after achieving the confidence goal; one young person responded with just one word: "Proud"



Steps to achieve wellbeing...

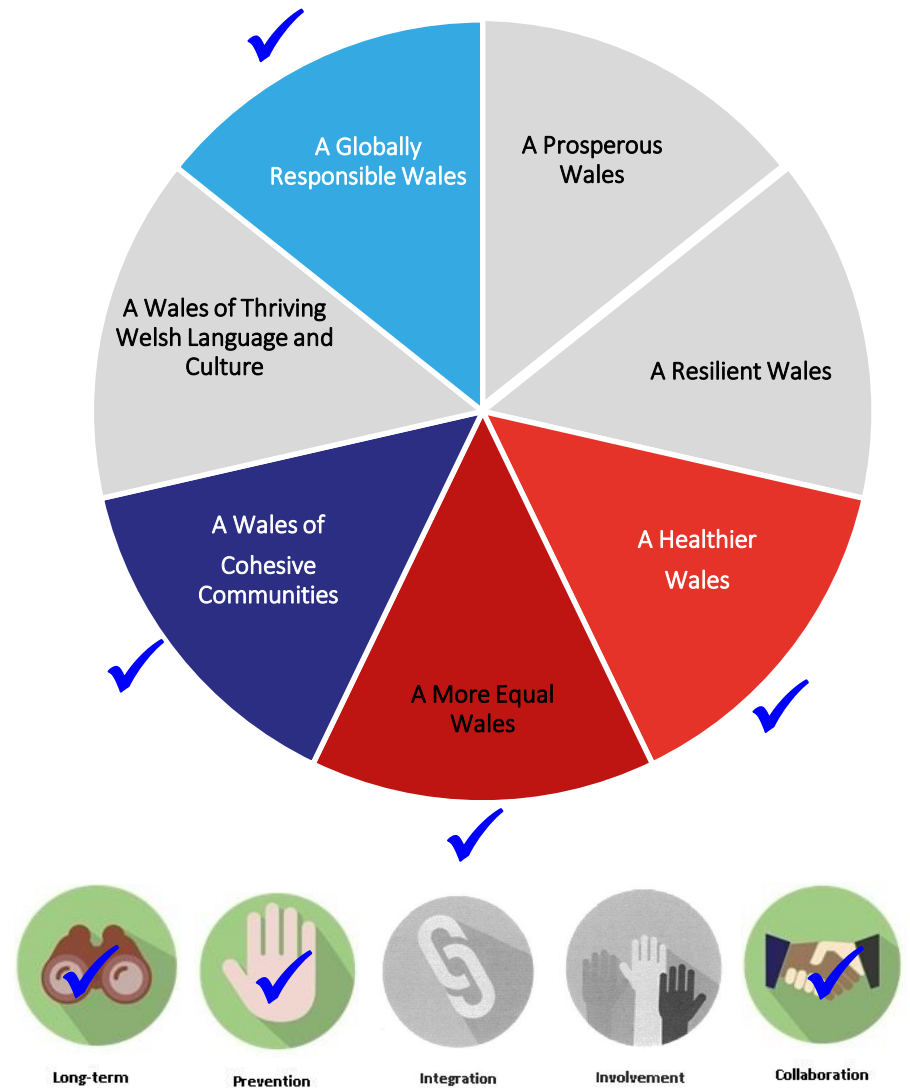
Case Study: Paint Recycling

For a number of years Merthyr Tydfil CBC has received many requests from residents of the County Borough as to whether or not paint collected at the Household Waste & Recycling Centres could be taken and used by them. The collection of left over paint for recycling is expensive for the Council and only water based paints were being recycled. Non-water based paints, thinners, varnishes etc. (classed as hazardous waste) are sent for specialist treatment.

In order to treat paint in a more sustainable and cheaper manner, the Council decided to introduce a project where it would offer the paint it collected to residents free of charge. MTCBC purchased containers to store paints, solvents etc. that the paint collected is decanted to. Site operatives at the collection points use their knowledge and experience to select by items which they deem suitable to offer for re-use. The quantities of paints given away are recorded for Welsh Government and NRW reporting purposes.

The project was introduced with effect from February 2019. By offering this facility; a number of members of the communities across Merthyr Tydfil have received free paint; enabling them to save money. From the Council's perspective, this re-use of paint is a more sustainable means of dealing with what would otherwise be classed as waste. The Council has also benefited through the reduction in treatment costs they have to cover following the introduction of the project. One resident who has used the re-use of paint scheme commented:

"My mam had been really poorly and we were concerned about her so decided to have her move in with us so we could care for her. We needed to change our downstairs room so that she could have her own space but we didn't have much money and were worried this would delay mam moving in. When we found out about the paint-re-use scheme we were thrilled as it meant we could make the space nicer for mam without having to find the cash for paint. This project really made a difference to us, it was great – mam now lives with us and is already bossing us about!"



Steps to achieve wellbeing...

Case Study: Foster Carer Recruitment

Fostering or foster care is a way of providing a safe and loving family home for children who cannot, for whatever the reason, live with their own parents. Foster families open their homes and hearts to children in need, and share their family life with them. Foster care is sometimes used as a temporary solution whilst problems within the birth family are resolved, or plans for adoption are completed. For many other children, fostering provides a permanent family environment where they can stay until they are old enough to live independently. The difficulties in the recruitment of foster carers had been well documented and had remained a concern for the Fostering Service within MTCBC for some time. Working together, MTCBC and Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (RCTCBC) aimed to deliver the regional work programme as set out by the National Fostering Framework led by the Regional Development Manager for Fostering Services.

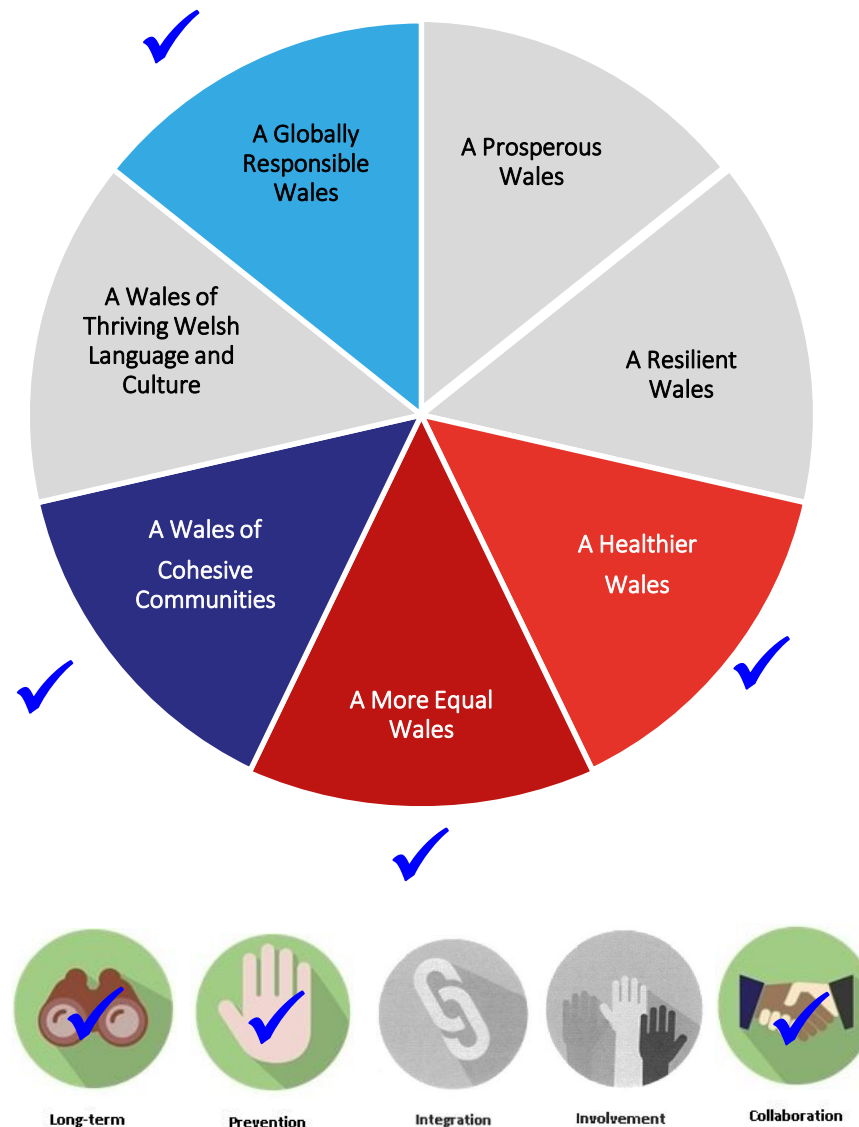
Through the regional working group, Merthyr Tydfil Council collaborated with RCTCBC to create a regional front door for fostering recruitment that aimed to increase the number of enquiries to foster as well as improving response times to potential applicants and promoting a customer focussed response. Staff needed to be recruited to form the new regional front door, including regional marketing and recruitment officers.

"I can't believe how quickly the team rang me back. It was great to have such a fast response".

Foster Care Applicant

An analysis of the service was completed to identify what is working, what needs further development and the level of impact the new front door could have, including costings. A new regional fostering enquiry line, website and recruitment processes (including key performance indicators) were developed by the Regional Development Manager and agreed by the regional working group. To attract more people to fostering, a marketing strategy has been developed and we are revising our offer to foster carers in order.

The regional front door was launched in April 2019 and the team has been fully established as the first point of contact for fostering recruitment enquiries in Merthyr Tydfil. By comparing the data between April and June 2018 to April and June 2019 it is evident that this change has already made a positive impact, as enquiries to foster increased from 8 to 10, those proceeding into assessment increased from 0 to 2 and timescales improved from initial enquiry into full assessment from 112 days to 39 days.



"The recruitment officer really put me at ease and answered all my questions."

Foster Care Applicant

Steps to achieve wellbeing...

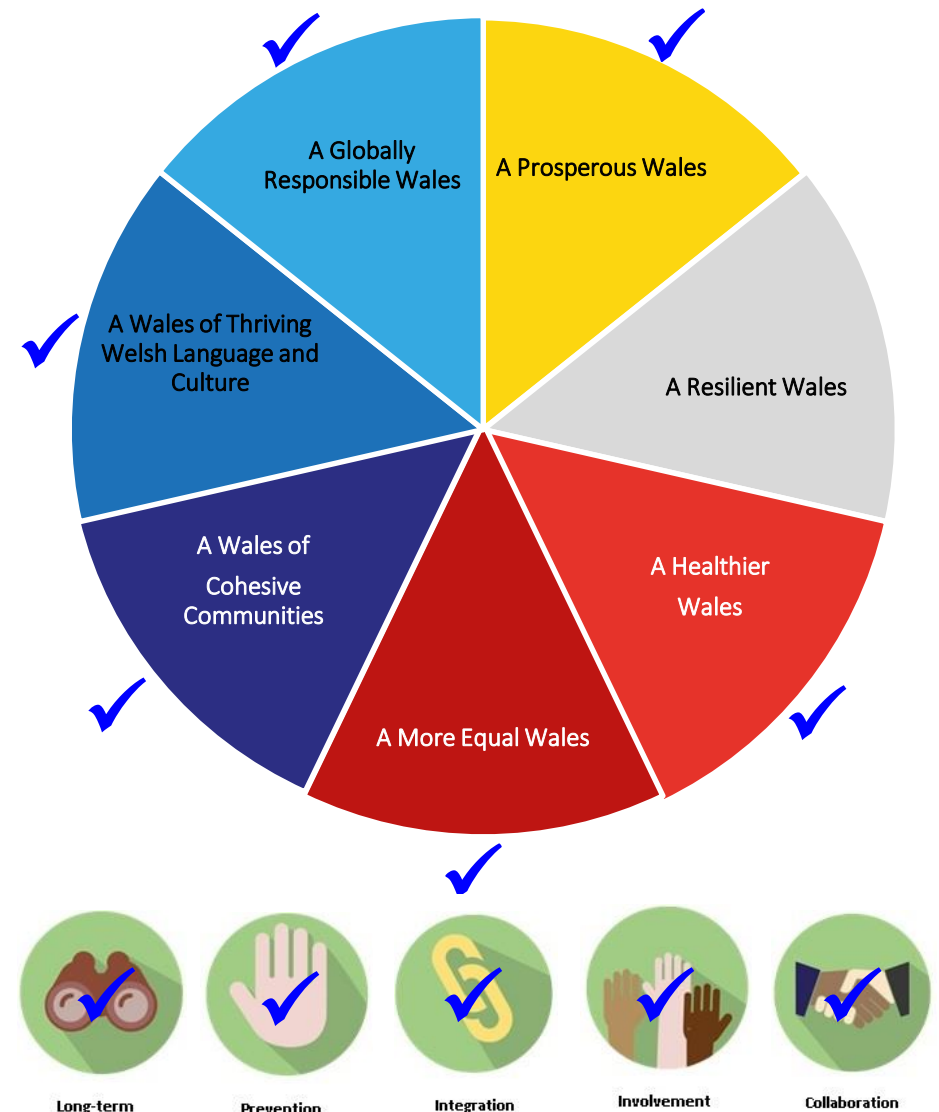
Case Study: *Flying Start – Nursery Rhymes Pre-school*

Nursery Rhymes pre-school in Treharris offers Flying Start provision to eligible children aged 2- 3 years. Children are funded to attend the pre-school and experience positive play and learning opportunities that help them develop their social, communication, physical and cognitive skills alongside their peers.

Nursery Rhymes began visiting the local care home in October to December 2018 after a risk assessment was undertaken and all necessary permissions were obtained. The visits were so popular that they applied and received a grant from Ffos-y-Fran to be able to continue the visits with small groups of children on a weekly basis. Every week Nursery Rhymes take a variety of items for the children to share with the residents e.g. tea sets, bubbles, books, puzzles, balls and dance ribbons. There are also items available at the care home for the children to engage with. They particularly enjoy the skittles or feeding the birds in the garden area. In addition, larger groups of children visited at Christmas and Easter to perform small concerts for the care home residents.

The children were a little shy and unsure to begin with but soon began to feel comfortable and now become excited when they discover it's their turn to go. Nursery Rhymes staff can see a great improvement in the way the children interact with the residents now that they feel confident there. They have noticed an increase in language from many of the children who are quieter during our normal sessions. The playgroup staff also stated that the visits have been great for their own wellbeing too, and they have really enjoyed chatting with the residents; they enjoy updating them with all the local news and the residents enjoy hearing it. This intergenerational working is an excellent example of the benefits of working across generations and is something that is being encouraged in other Flying Start settings.

A staff member at the nursing home said: 'The intergenerational project has had significant benefits to both groups. The purpose of the group is to encourage communication between the different generations, and this has worked extremely well. The residents have enjoyed the visits from Nursery Rhymes. We have found the children well behaved and well mannered. They present as being very articulate considering how young they are, and this must be partly due to the excellent work the staff do with the children... they have enjoyed the interaction and the singing and having little chats with them. The residents have told the staff of the care home 'it brings back memories and they always look forward to the visits'. Some of the residents make more of an effort to attend the day room rather than stay in their own private rooms when they know that the children are coming... It is a pleasure to have the children and staff visiting and they brighten up the day'.



Resident V: 'They bring back so many memories and I enjoy the singing. They brighten up our days.'

One child said (when referring to a resident at the care home): 'John is my friend'

Steps to achieve wellbeing...

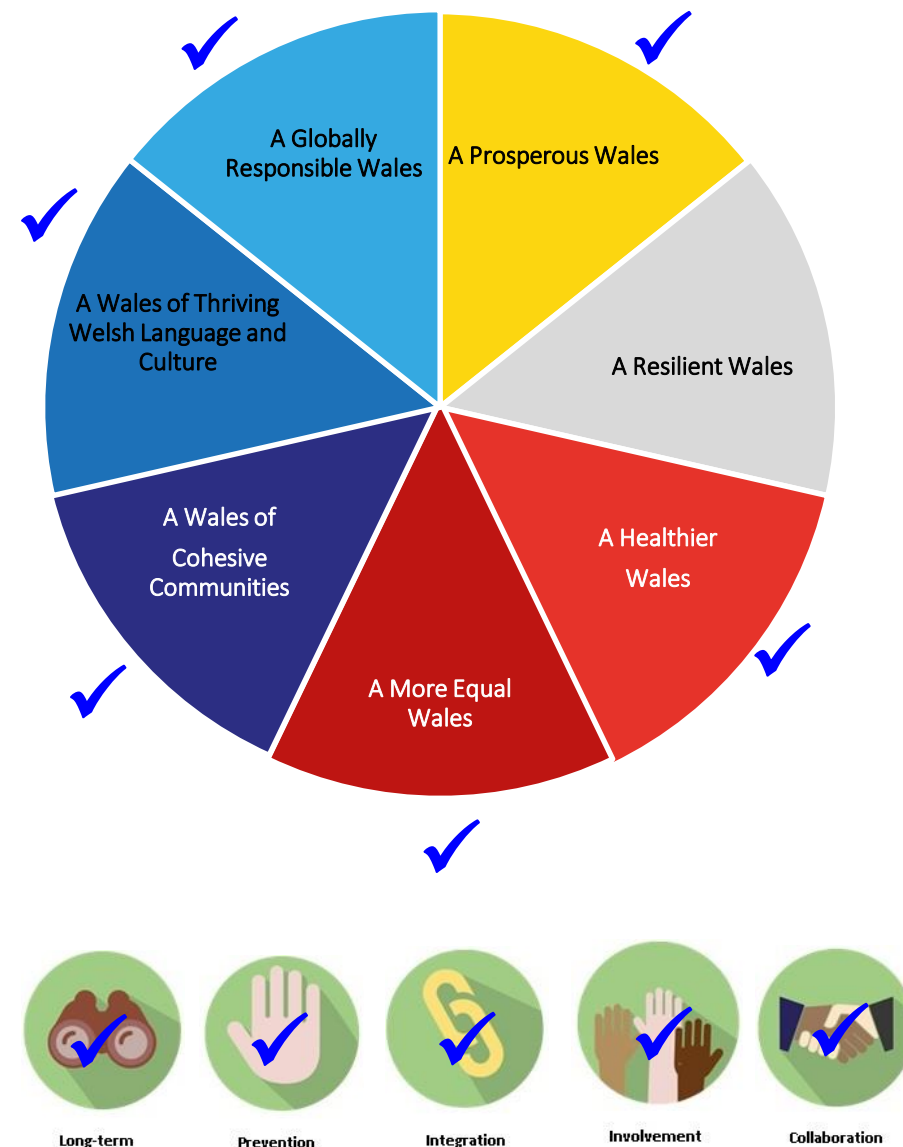
Case Study: *Flying Start – Parents Experience*

Parent X is a mum and lives in the Gurnos and eligible for Flying Start. Her son attended Seren Bach preschool during 2018-2019. Flying Start is a Welsh Government funded project targeted at the areas of highest need throughout Wales, its aim is to provide children 0-4 with the best possible ‘Flying Start’ in life. Flying Start Programme provides: funded quality, part-time childcare for 2-3-year-olds; an enhanced health visiting & midwifery service; access to parenting programmes; support for early language development; and family support services.

Preschool were able to refer X Parenting support where they were able to help her with her son’s behaviour as it was affecting her mental; from this referral X got onto the Incredible Years and Take 3 courses. Preschool staff also monitored her son’s behaviour closely and put Individual Play Plans in place which helped him progress through set targets based on what he needed to work on; this helped when referring to the Flying Start Educational Psychologist. When preschool asked for extra support from the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) panel they could show that he was not improving as he should due to h struggle with behavioural issues.

Preschool used lots of different strategies with X’s son and then fed back to her daily about how his day had been and what they had done to support him. Preschool also organised an extra transition meeting that X could meet the Headteacher from the nursery and express her worries and concerns. Preschool explained about her sons’ behaviours and what they had done to help and support him, which the nurse has adopted. X’s son has now started nursery and thanks to Flying Start he has several support network in place (e.g. MIA health visitor, CAMHS, Barnardo’s, Flying Start Community Nursery Nurse) for when things get difficult. X now feels less anxious as the support is there when she needs it.

“My family has benefited loads from Flying Start. I can’t put into words how much it has helped me and it is great that it was so close to where I live. The staff have been fantastic with both me and my son and have given us support throughout with different issues and daily difficulties. My son attended 5 morning sessions a week which gave me the time to attend courses and appointments and to catch up on cleaning and sleep as my son is a poor sleeper. This break allowed me to have time to myself which helped my anxiety. My son received fantastic support within preschool, specifically working on dealing with his difficulty to concentrate, regulating his emotions, building relationships with other children, coping with frustration etc.”



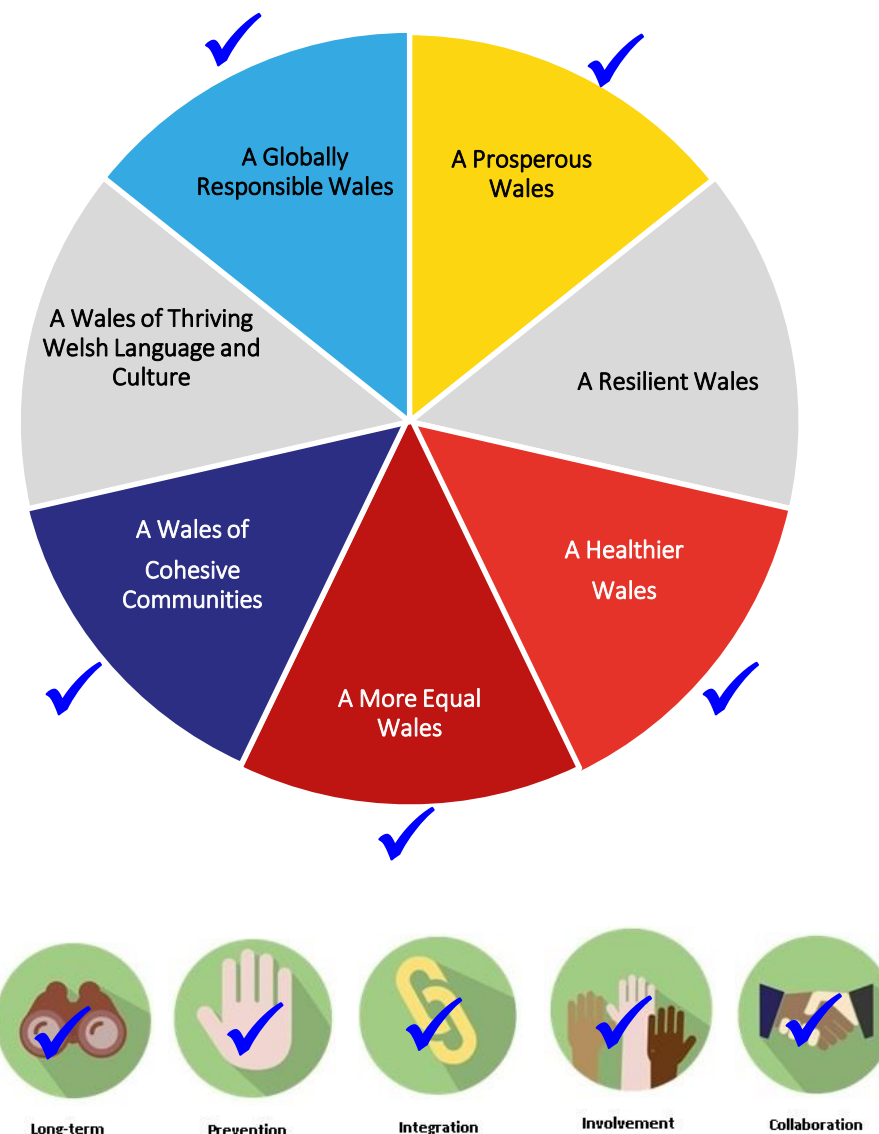
Steps to achieve wellbeing...

Case Study: Council Tax Exemption Relief for Care Leavers

The Local Authority's duties to Care Leavers are set out in Part 6 Code of Practice and accompanying regulations under the Social Services and Well-being Act (Wales) 2014. Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council is committed to being a good and improving Corporate Parent to Looked After young people and Care Leavers. In particular, we plan to deliver our offer to Care Leavers under Hidden Ambition which is located in Children's Services Strategy for Success, Stability and Transition for looked after young people and care leavers. Care Leavers' accommodation arrangements vary under the following possible options that are determined by young people's views, circumstances and Pathway Plans: Living independently (this might be in MTCBC or out of county); Living with former foster carers under 'When I'm Ready' arrangements; Living with parents or relatives; and Living in supported lodgings.

On 27th June Council voted to amend the Council's Discretionary Relief Policy to exempt care leavers from Council Tax payments with effect from 1st April 2018; there are 103 care leavers who are known to the care leaving service. For those care leavers who will have become responsible for Council Tax or will in future become responsible for Council Tax, with consent, information will be shared with Council Tax team who will be requested to apply the relevant exemption. For those young people who are resident out of county and become responsible for Council Tax - we will approach their local authority of residence in pursuit of exemption. Many authorities have similar arrangements in place. For pre-existing care leavers information has been and will continue to be shared with colleagues in Council Tax with individuals' consent, ensuring that the relevant exemption is applied backdated to 1st April 2018.

By making this policy change we are making plans for all Merthyr Tydfil Care Leavers to be supported in transitioning into an adulthood that is stable and successful. We also want all Care Leavers aged 18-25 years living in Merthyr to be exempt from paying Council Tax to help them financially. Finally, we want all Merthyr Care Leavers living out of area to have the same financial support that Council Tax exemption would offer them if they were living within Merthyr.



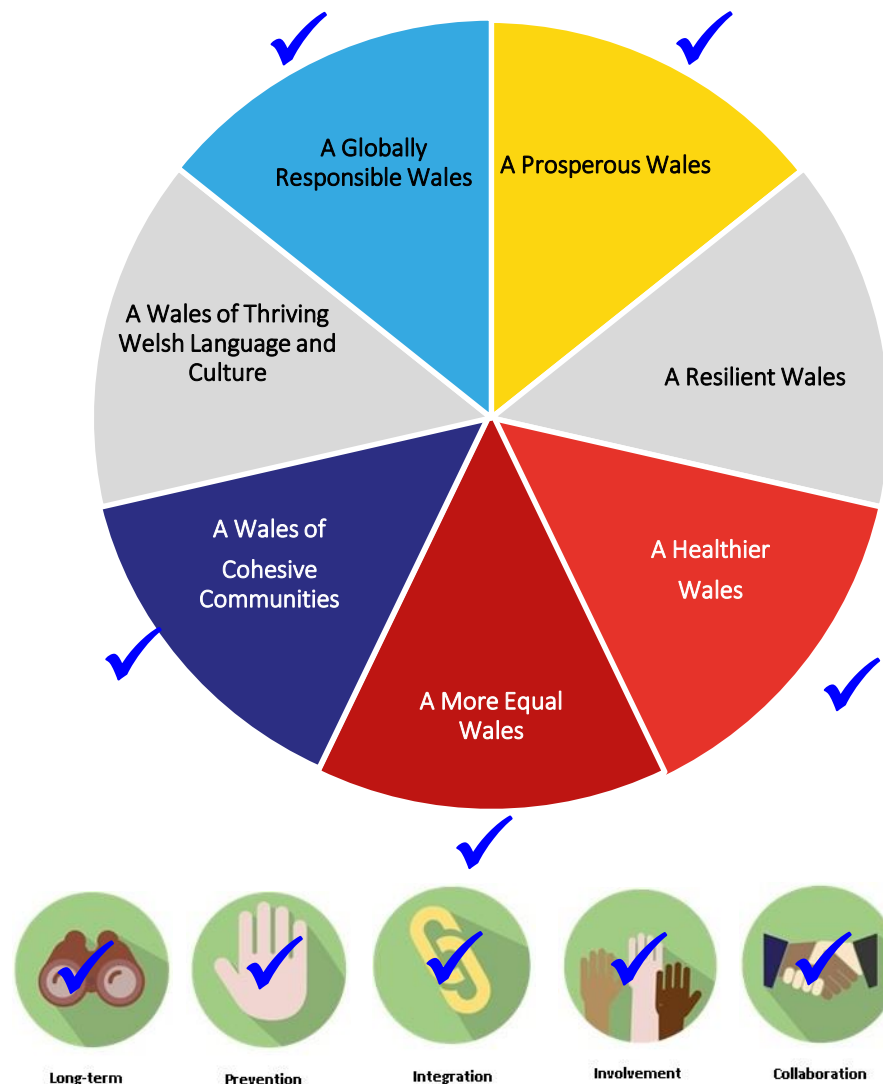
Steps to achieve wellbeing...

Case Study: ADREF: Newstart (Criminal Offending)

Sharron was assisted by Adref after she moved into a flat following a period of homelessness and a stay in hostel in provision. She took a tenancy offered in a rush, and soon realised that she was struggling to afford the rent payments. Sharron had a criminal offending history and she was trying to recover from alcohol dependency and was also suffering from emotional/mental health issues resulting from the loss of her mother, grandmother and a child she was carrying which she miscarried late in the pregnancy; she often talked of ending her own life throughout the support period. Sharron had recently been transferred to Universal Credit and was receiving £600 a month in benefit, which included £400 she had to pay to her landlord and £50 for her water bill, leaving her with only £150 to manage on for the rest of month. When Adref first visited her, she had no heating and was living off breakfast cereal, as she couldn't afford food.

The immediate issue that needed to be addressed was Sharron's financial predicament. Her Tenancy Support Officer assisted her to make an application for Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP), which would help towards her rent. It was also apparent that Sharron was suffering from several medical issues that meant she was clearly unable to work. With this in mind, the Tenancy Support Officer assisted Sharron to apply for benefits that reflected her physical and mental needs. Initially Sharron was not accessing support for her alcohol misuse issues but she was supported to seek help. However, she was reluctant to attend unless the Tenancy Support Officer accompanied her. Sharron also refused to accept support for her mental health issues, and was clearly suffering from a form of agoraphobia, as she rarely left her flat. She was accompanied to the local Community Mental Health Team and to appointments with a psychiatrist.

Since receiving support Sharron's tenancy is now secure and she no longer wishes to move out. This was achieved by improving her financial well-being and significantly raising the amount that she had to live on. During support, Sharron was also assisted to register with Merthyr Living to try and achieve less expensive accommodation. Sharron was eventually able to clear her arrears of debt, and to schedule her monthly payments in order to avoid her getting back into debt. She was supported to attend her appointments with Community Drug and Alcohol Team, Community Mental Health Team and Psychiatrist, her emotional health started to improve significantly, and she has since started leaving her property more often. Before her issues started, Sharron had worked for the local Community Drug and Alcohol Team as a tutor for service users who were interested in developing their artistic talents. It is Sharron's hope, that she can follow this up at some point in the future, and go on to a full-time teaching role, once her emotional issues have been addressed. Sharron also hopes to reapply for her driving license, which would allow her to get out of her flat more and engage with her adult children. Sharron also has a desire to become a grief counsellor following the death of close friends.



Steps to achieve wellbeing...

Case Study: ADRF: LATSS (Mental Health)

Mrs W was temporarily relocated to another area of Merthyr Tydfil, as her previous property became uninhabitable. In order to be offered a replacement property in her local area, she needed to ensure her rent account was up to date. Mrs W required support to assist her to maintain her tenancy and challenge the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) decision to stop her Personal Independence Payment (PIP) claim. When Mrs W's PIP was stopped, it created a reduction in her housing benefit claim because there were two non-dependent adults residing at the property and she accrued rent arrears. This resulted in Mrs W being served an eviction notice by her landlord (a local social landlord).

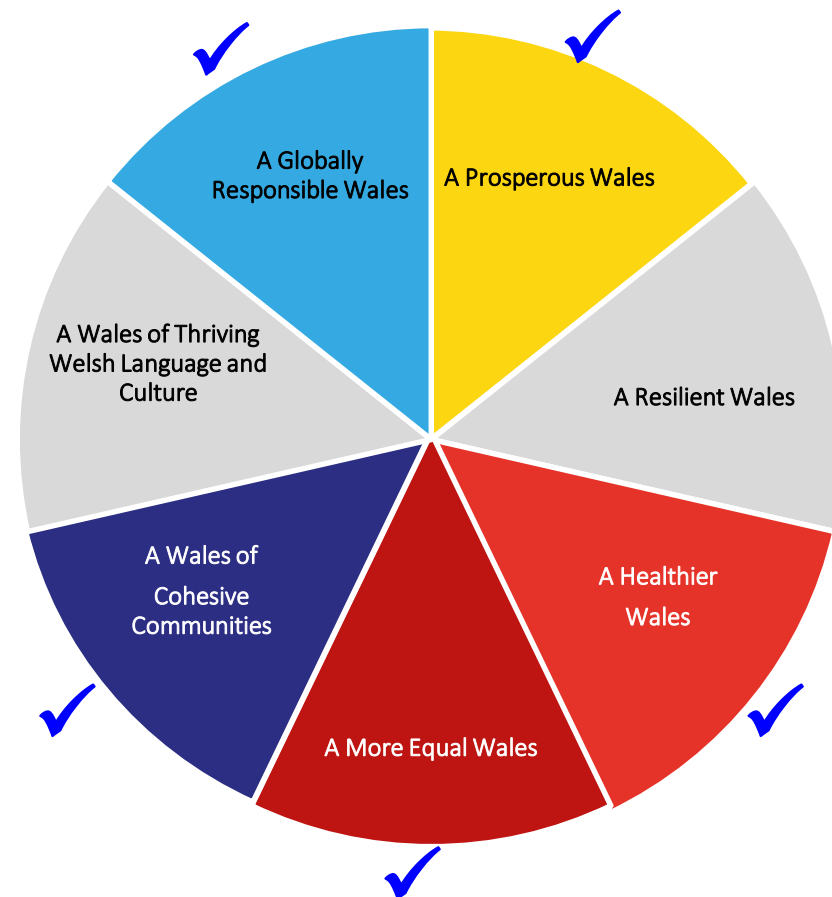
Mrs W was given support to request a Mandatory Reconsideration regarding her PIP being stopped, which was unsuccessful. Further support was given to apply for a Tribunal hearing to reconsider this decision. With further evidence obtained and submitted to the Tribunal, Mrs W successfully had her PIP reinstated and back dated the nine months it had taken to go through this process.

During this period Mrs W was supported to set up numerous repayment plans with her landlord to pay the large shortfall in her rent; at this point Mrs W was only in receipt of Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) and she struggled to stick to these repayment plans. Food parcels and utility credit was sourced to assist Mrs W to improve her standard of living during this period.

When Mrs W's PIP was reinstated and backdated, her full Housing Benefit entitlement was also reinstated. Mrs W received a payment of £1100 from her landlord, as there was an overpayment on rent account because she had been making top up payments. Assistance was given from Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) with addressing her debts by applying for a Debt Relief Order. Support was also provided to Mrs W to attend Mental Health appointments and other appointments, plus attending local groups of interest to her, to allow her to feel more part of the community.

Mrs W is successfully living in the temporary housing placement and waiting to be issued alternative housing in her desired location. Some of her debts have been addressed; others will be addressed with further support from Tenancy Support Officer (TSO) and CAB. Mrs W's Mental Health has improved, which has allowed her to attend local groups and activities of her interest to her. Mrs W is now awarded the appropriate amount of income to live a life in basic comfort.

Mrs W's future plans are to relocate back to Merthyr Vale and complete further courses before looking at employment options.



Long-term



Prevention



Integration



Involvement



Collaboration

Steps to achieve wellbeing...

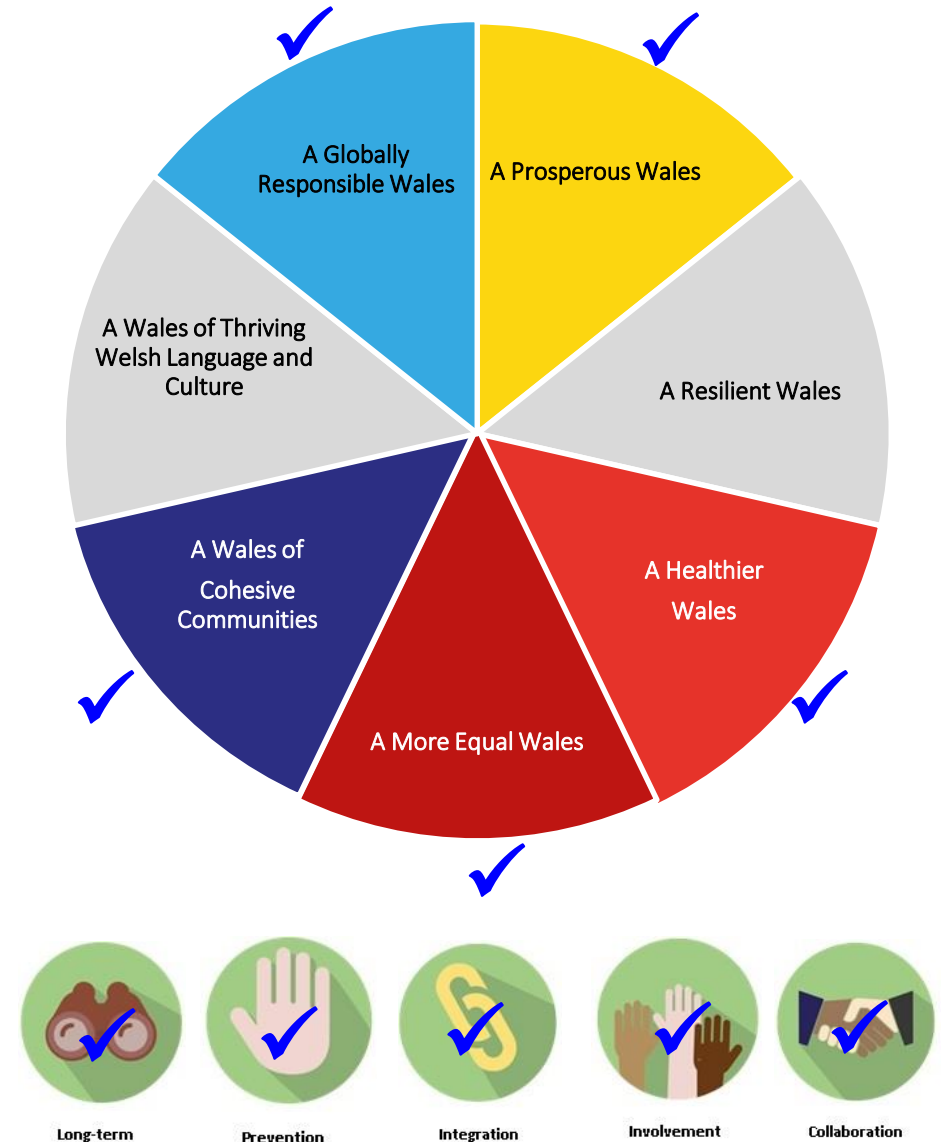
Case Study: *ADREF: Prison in Reach*

Miss P needed support to find a tenancy after being served an eviction notice by her landlord; this tenancy was privately rented though an agent. Miss P got into difficulties with paying her rent when she could not continue to work as a result of suffering from anxiety and depression. During this time, she also ran up other debts. Miss P had no prior understanding of the benefits system because she had always worked. In addition to this, there were also issues with her children's abusive father. Miss P has a daughter aged 9 and a son aged 6. At the point of support her debts were just over £2000 and Miss P was so anxious, she could not make eye contact when talking.

Miss P was given support to provide her employer with fit notes (or Statement of Fitness for Work). When her employment came to an end Miss P was supported to claim all the benefits that she was entitled to. A Tenancy Support Officer liaised with the landlord's agent to delay the eviction. Support was given to Miss P to register her on the Common Housing Register, and addition information was given to her to build her understanding of the banding and bidding system. Further advice and support was provided when the housing list transferred to an on-line system. Ongoing support was given regarding her universal credit claim. Miss P was provided with support to manage her finances, given food parcels while waiting for universal credit payments and received assistance with benefits and utility's after moving into social housing. The Tenancy Support Officer supported Miss P to access Citizen's Advice to address her debts and seek specialist advice regarding maintenance payments from ex-partner. Advice was given regarding the safety and security of Miss P and her children as well as support to attend general practitioner (G.P) and housing appointments. Reassurance was given throughout support that her situation will improve.

Miss P is now living in social housing, that is affordable to her. This tenancy is near other family members and Miss P feels safer. Her debts have been addressed and issues with her ex-partner have reduced. All her benefits are in place and she is able to manage her finances appropriate. Miss P's mental health has improved which has allowed her to start training courses at a local community centre. Miss P now feel confident enough to attend her appointments on her own.

Miss P plans to live independently without support, find employment, learn to drive, and to enjoy life. She doesn't want to cry in front of her children again over issues with money. She now plans to start the process of getting her ex-partner to contribute financially to the children.



Steps to achieve wellbeing...

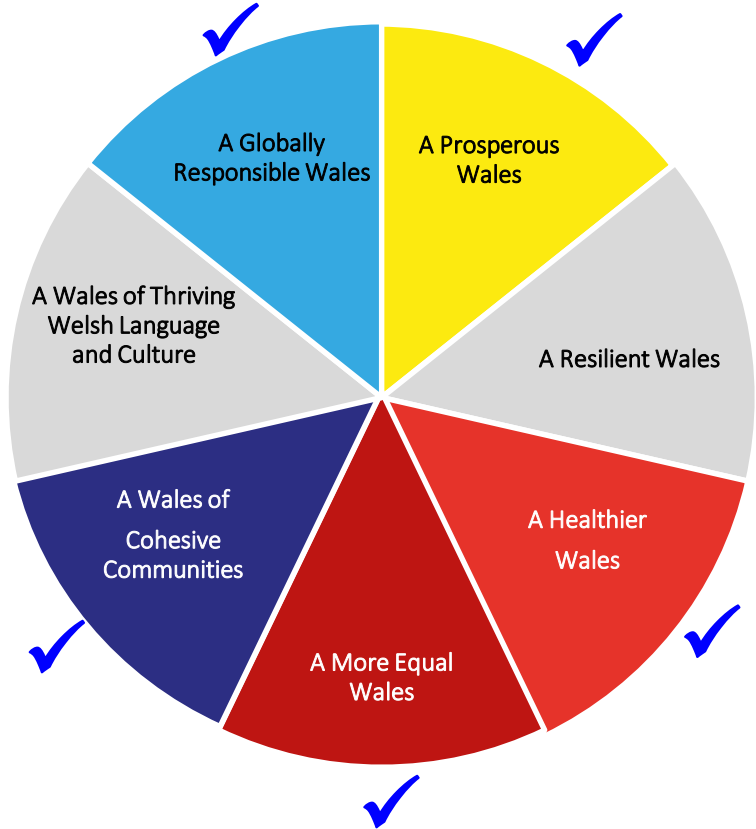
Case Study: Llamau Domestic Abuse Services: Merthyr Refuge

Dee had a son two years before she met Nick and it was with her agreement her son went to live with her dad and his family, where she would visit. Dee loved her son and every moment she spent with him. Dee lived with Nick for three years. He abused her physically, emotionally, sexually and financially throughout this time. Dee suffers with mental health issues and has Aspergers, which Nick used to undermine her and make her feel worthless. During the relationship with Nick, he convinced her that her family no longer cared for her and created a rift between her and them. He stopped visits with her son, and completely isolated her from her family and friends. As a result, Dee's mental health deteriorated and she became suicidal.

One day, Nick locked Dee in her flat and subjected her to a serious physical assault. It was then she realised she couldn't take the abuse any more. The moment he left to go to an appointment she left with just the clothes on her back and didn't look back. She stopped at an old friends house and then called the Police who arrived and took her straight to hospital to treat her injuries. They rang her and, at her request, explained what she'd been going through. They supported Dee to find refuge space in Merthyr. Dee has been forever grateful to the officers who spent the night in hospital with her, found her refuge space and more importantly for Dee they spoke to her dad and explained everything for her.

Dee had never heard of refuge accommodation, so had no idea of what to expect. She settled into her self-contained flat with toiletries and clothing given by staff, and for the first time in years slept safely. The first priority was Dee's health and well-being. Her attack had left her with cracked ribs, severe damage to her ear and she was covered with bruising throughout her body. Staff registered her with the local GP and supported her to all hospital appointments. Dee's support worker accompanied her when she gave a statement to police. Dee explained how she had suffered in her relationship with Nick, he was arrested and later imprisoned. Dee did not want to return to her old home through fear of repercussions, and the memories of the assaults she had experienced.

Dee's support worker worked closely with her housing officer to end the tenancy and start looking for a new home closer to her son. During this time Dee became stronger, attended community group work and she was always saying thanks to the police and Llamau for changing her life. She wanted to share her story to promote services and took every opportunity to inspire others to seek help. She offered to speak at Llamau's impact event in front of 100's of strangers, and from there spoke at a Cymorth event about the importance of trauma informed support. As part of the campaign to protect housing grants Dee spoke to ITV about how refuge had given her a second chance in life. It was amazing for all who worked with her to see the transformation in her in just 6 months. However, Dee felt her biggest achievement was being a mum again and is working towards having her son equally with her dad.



Long-term



Prevention



Integration



Involvement



Collaboration

Steps to achieve wellbeing...

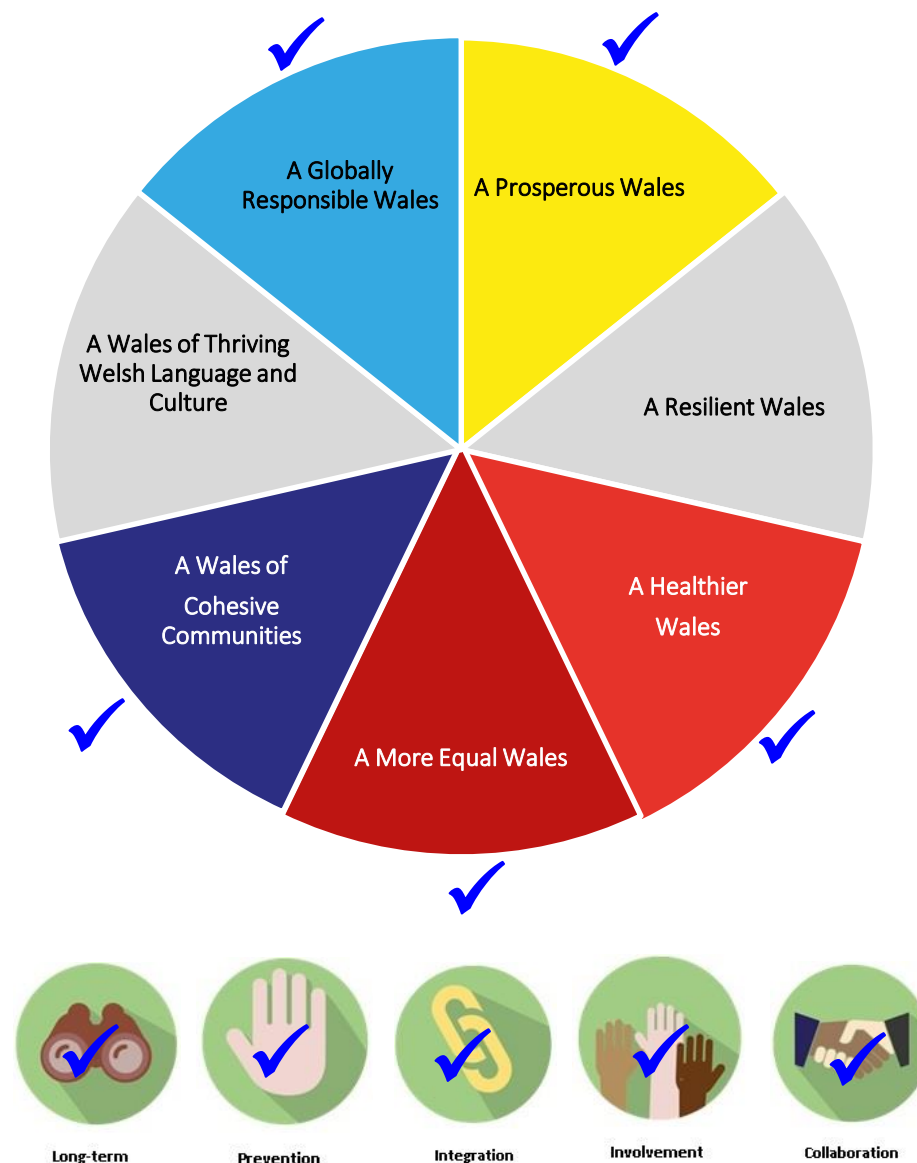
Case Study: *Merthyr Valleys Homes*

T was homeless and sofa surfing at different family and friends' homes. Attempts were made to access her local hostel, but she was unable to as it was a dry hostel and at the time, she was heavily dependent on alcohol. T had very poor literacy and numeracy skills and had difficulty reading and writing.

In October 2017 she accessed temporary accommodation with floating support at Merthyr Valleys Homes. Support was provided to help her set up her tenancy in temporary accommodation and utilities; through the support of a DAF application she was also granted a cooker, fridge and a washing machine. T was supported to enrol on a basic skills course at the Neighbourhood Learning Centre, where she is excelling in her studies and is now in year 2 of the course. Support was also put in place with Drug Aid to help her with her alcohol dependency. As of February 2019, T has been abstinent for over a year. T had several issues with anti-social behaviour in the area and was supported to report these incidents to our Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) team. Due to being in temporary accommodation she was placed on Living Merthyr's auto bid by the Council and in August 2018 was shortlisted for a one bedroom flat. She was supported to apply for a DHP to cover the removal costs as she was on a low income, and additional support was given to set up her new tenancy in terms of utilities, change of address for GP, DWP, MTCBC, etc.

T has been abstinent from alcohol since December 2017 through support from Merthyr Valleys Homes, Drug Aid and her family. She has moved to a different area where there are no anti-social behaviour issues and she now feels safe. T is engaging with learning she is currently enrolled on to the second year of basic skills in numeracy and literacy course at the Neighbourhood Learning Centre. T moved into an assured shorthold tenancy in August 2018; her first tenancy, which she can manage effectively and is no longer homeless. T has a low income but has excellent budgeting skills and manages her finances extremely well. She is accessing the correct health services after being diagnosed with diabetes and is also engaging with the mental health team.

T's future plans are to continue to remain abstinent from alcohol and engage with Drug Aid if she feels like she wants to drink or needs some support or advice. She also knows to contact Merthyr Valleys Homes support team at any time if she feels she requires housing related support or advice. Finally, T wants to continue to study at the Neighbourhood Learning Centre on the Basic Skills course which will help her in the future.



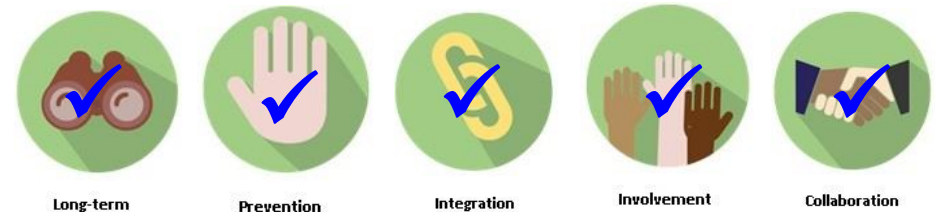
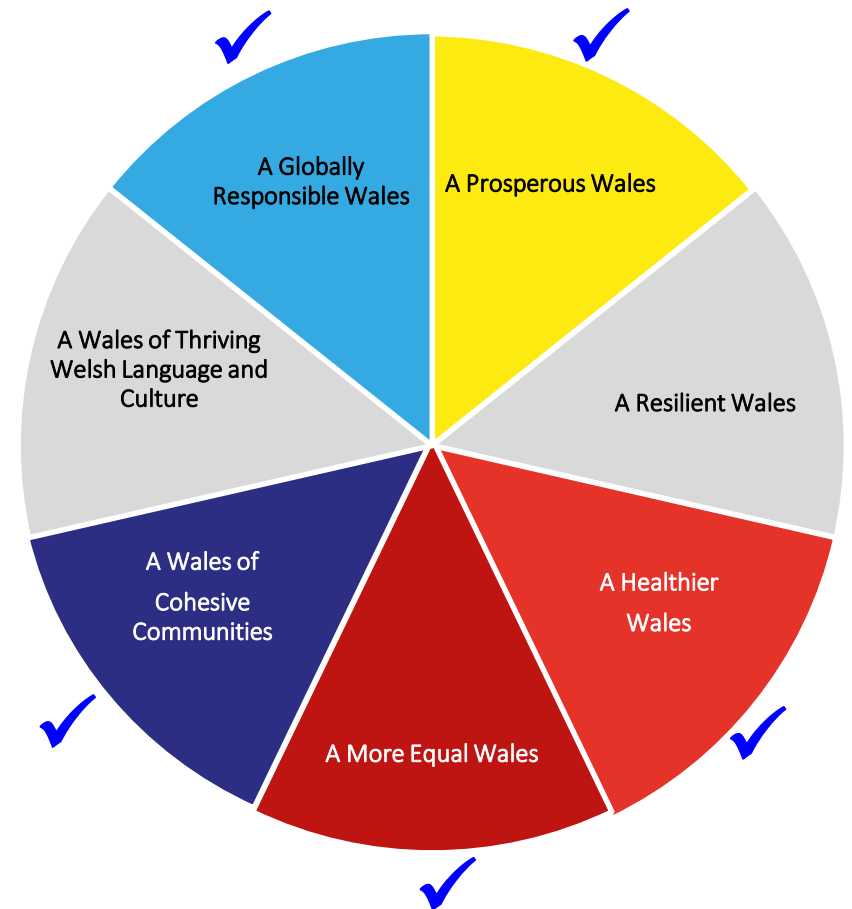
Steps to achieve wellbeing...

Case Study: *Llamau Womens Services: Merthyr Refuge*

Jay had been with her husband Roy for 38 years. Jay felt at first it was a happy marriage but over the years it became more difficult. She described her marriage as constantly being on egg shells and 'on alert' to what mood he would be in and she learned to anticipate what would please him. Her life was spent keeping Roy happy as, in return it kept her three children happy. Over the years, she suffered emotional abuse, constant mind games and the 'changing of rules', always with an ongoing threat of violence from Roy which she felt made her conform to his demands. Jay was working two jobs to make ends meet and hadn't spoken to her employers about what she was living with. She shared with staff how he took pleasure in embarrassing her in public, in front of friends and family he would shame and belittle her. Two years previously she sought help from Womens Aid, they helped her to identify the domestic abuse and gave her the courage to leave. However Roy's mother died and Jay felt her family needed her to stay so remained. After his mother's death, Roy's behaviour became even more controlling. Jay's children were grown up and she had grandchildren that she now worried about. Jay knew she had to leave him and get out of the area so that he could not track her down and force her back. Thankfully she came to our refuge.

We provided Jay with a 1 bedroom flat with toiletries and a food bank parcel as soon as she arrived, as she had no access to income; Jay settled in quickly and made her flat a home. Jay had not talked about the abuse with her family and friends, and said with staff she found it easy to share what she had suffered and her fears for the future. We supported Jay to speak to her employers, and access counselling through her employer as part of their well-being package. Jay had a job and a mortgaged property so we worked closely with our local housing benefit team who supported Jay with a discretionary housing payment to enable her to stay in refuge. Jay joined our Freedom Programme to develop her understanding of perpetrator behaviours, and attended community and Llamau events.

During her stay Jay's confidence grew each day, she enjoyed the space and time she needed to find herself again. Jay shared she had lost her identity and self-worth, and felt her mental health was improved during her time in refuge. Staff supported Jay to meet with a solicitor; this helped her understand the divorce process and what she would be entitled to in the future. We spent hours looking at properties with her and talking positively about her new future. Jay was unable to access housing through her local authority due to her income and mortgaged property. She decided against private rental, and accepted her daughters offer to move in with her while the divorce and house sale proceeded. Jay received resettlement support from refuge and has the contact details for housing related outreach, should she need it in the future.











MTBWYF Young Person Co-opted Scrutiny Member Feedback

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council has integrated young person representatives into the membership of each of its scrutiny committees. As part of the self-reflection process undertaken each year, the Scrutiny Support Team contacted young person representatives to gather their views on their experiences during 2018-19. These can be found below:

EWC is a co opted member of the Governance, Performance, Business Change and Corporate Services scrutiny committee. EWC commented:

"I am a member of Merthyr Tydfil Borough Wide Youth Forum and am relatively new to my Scrutiny post.

Being involved in Scrutiny has helped me to gain a better understanding of what is going on in the county borough. I have been made to feel very welcome by the Chair, Councillor Tanya Skinner, as well as by the other Scrutiny members. I am gaining confidence in meetings to speak; I now have a better understanding of how the meetings work and the reports make more sense.

The last few months I have been studying for my GCSE exams and this has limited my commitment. Moving forward, I am hoping to become more involved by supporting areas of work that I am interested in".

TB is a co opted member of the Neighbourhood Services, Planning & Countryside scrutiny committee. TB commented:

"I am 12 years old and very new to this post. I was very nervous at my first meeting; but everyone has been very supportive and made me feel very welcome.

Being part of scrutiny has been an enormous learning curve for me. It is not easy to understand the information in the reports; but I have quickly learned how to pull out relevant information and I am becoming more confident to challenge and question officers. There is a lot of good work going on in Merthyr Tydfil that people don't know about if they visited the scrutiny meetings they would understand more.

ME is a co-opted member of the Regeneration & Public Protection scrutiny committee. ME commented:

"By becoming a youth co-opted scrutiny member, I have had the opportunity to get to know what's going on in my area, participating has given me the confidence to use my voice within the meetings and be involved with council work. My advice to anyone who is thinking of taking part in scrutiny would be to have an open mind and the courage to voice your opinion and listen. All of these will help you gain life skills for the future and help you to be the best you can be. I really enjoy the topics discussed in Scrutiny and getting involved in working groups, I am currently on the Town Planning Group and the Homelessness task and finish group and have encouraged other young people to get involved in these agendas".

KS has been a co opted member of the Governance, Performance, Business Change and Corporate Services scrutiny committee; and is now going to take up a place on the Learning & LAESCYP scrutiny committee. KS commented:

"I have been involved in Scrutiny for about 18 months and enjoyed every minute of it. In the beginning it was very difficult to understand what was going on and the terminology.

The best part was having someone next to me that I knew and trusted to support me to feel confident when asking questions. In the last few months I have really gained in confidence and now attend the meetings on my own. I understand now how scrutiny works and how important it is to ask constructive challenging questions to ensure that the best interests of the community are met.

I think that more young people should get involved in scrutiny and attend meetings. I will soon be moving to Learning & LAESCYP scrutiny and I am looking forward to getting to grips with understanding more about education in Merthyr Tydfil".

RC is a co opted member of the Learning & LAESCYP scrutiny committee. RC commented:

"I was the first young person to become a youth member of this scrutiny. It has been an education and I have really enjoyed the experience.

I am a University student and I am passionate that every young person should have the best opportunities in life in order to receive the best education possible. Being a member of Scrutiny has helped me to gain in confidence, understand more about how the local authority works, understand how to pull out relevant information from reports and formulate and ask relevant challenging questions.

I have thoroughly enjoyed the experience and have a healthy respect for the time and effort local officers and Scrutiny members commit to.

ED is a co-opted member of the Social Services scrutiny committee. ED commented:

"I am a member of Merthyr Tydfil Borough Wide Youth Forum and I am 14 years of age. I became a youth co-opted member of Scrutiny in September 2018 and was really excited at the prospect of helping others.

Although I am very quiet I am more of a reflective learner, I listen to everything that is said and reflect on it I don't really like speaking in public but the experience I have had so far has already had a positive impact by improving my confidence in lessons. I am looking to helping to make a difference".

Like all councils in Wales, our work is scrutinised by external regulators to ensure that we use public money effectively to deliver benefits to our communities. The Wales Audit Office (WAO) has an annual programme of audit and assessment work which it undertakes in the council, and the conclusions from all this work are brought together in an Annual Improvement Report. Other regulators undertake work relating to specific service areas. The other primary regulators are Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales (Estyn) and the Care Inspectorate for Wales (CIW).

Wales Audit Office

Each year, the Wales Audit Office reports on how well each council is planning for improvement and delivering their services. The latest Annual Improvement Report for Merthyr Tydfil incorporates the Corporate Assessment and was issued in September 2018. The report concluded that, during 2017/18 **the Council is meeting its statutory requirements in relation to continuous improvement.**

During the course of the year, the Auditor General did not make any formal recommendations, however; a number of proposals for improvement have been made. In summary, this includes:

- Working towards better decision making and risk taking
- Building on work already undertaken to improve the Council's Scrutiny arrangements to ensure they are 'Fit for the Future'.

Please visit www.audit.wales/publications to view the latest 'Annual Improvement Report 2017 / 18' for Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council'

Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales (Estyn)

Estyn is the office of Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales. The purpose of Estyn is to provide an independent inspection and advice service on quality and standards in education and training in Wales.

To search for the latest reports, please visit www.estyn.gov.wales/inspection

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)

We register, inspect and take action to improve the quality and safety of services for the well-being of the people of Wales. This includes the review of the Council's children and adult social services.

For the latest review and inspection reports on the effectiveness of our services, please visit the 'Our Reports' section of www.careinspectorate.wales

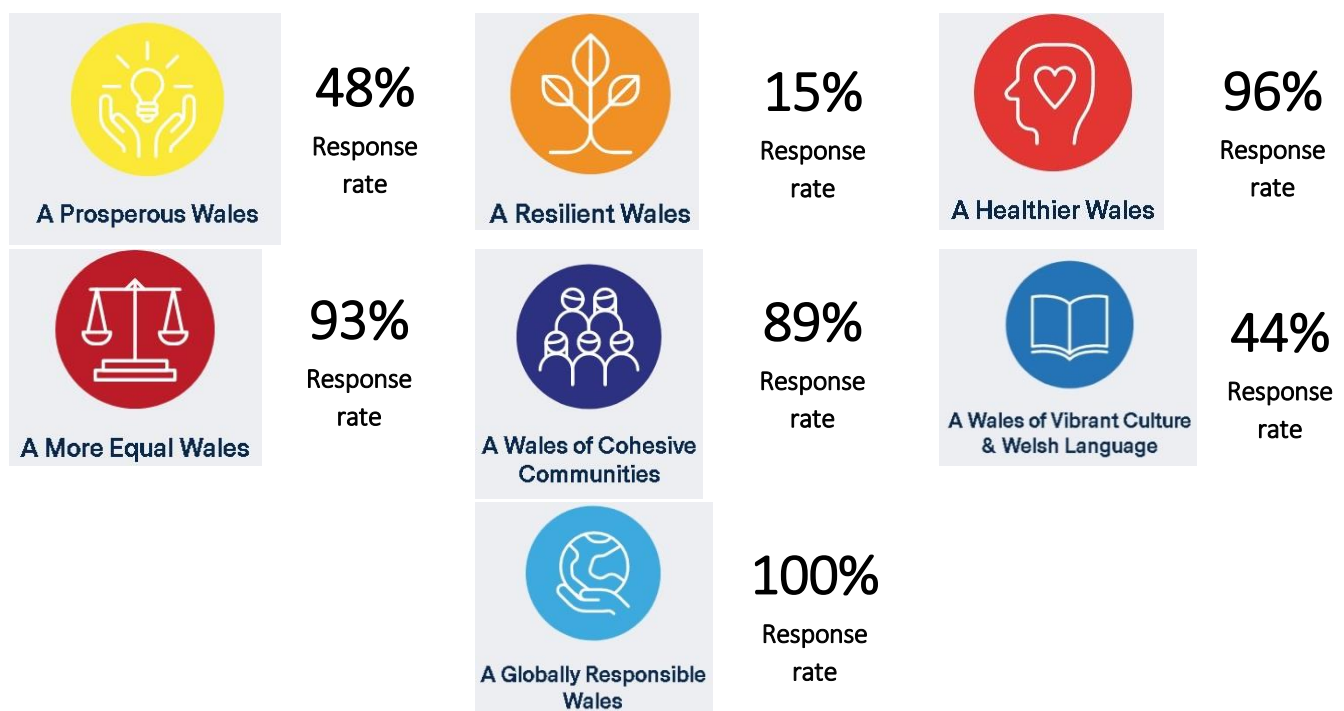
What have we learned from looking back over the progress made during 2018-19?

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council aims to support the achievement of the seven national wellbeing goals and use the five ways of working in each of the activities and services it offers to the people of Merthyr Tydfil.

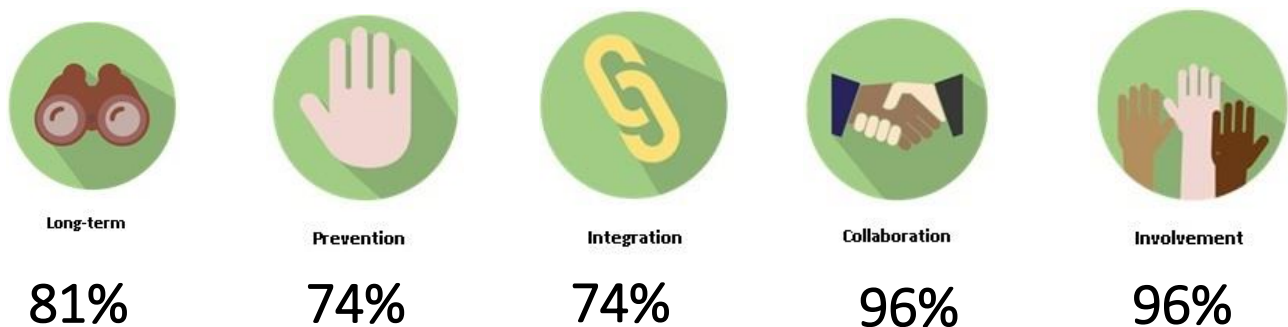
Following completion of the process to produce this backward looking report; we have been able to present a snap-shot including some of the activities and services delivered by the Council; the qualitative case studies forming the basis of this.

An analysis of the 17 case studies has enabled us to identify the following response rates:

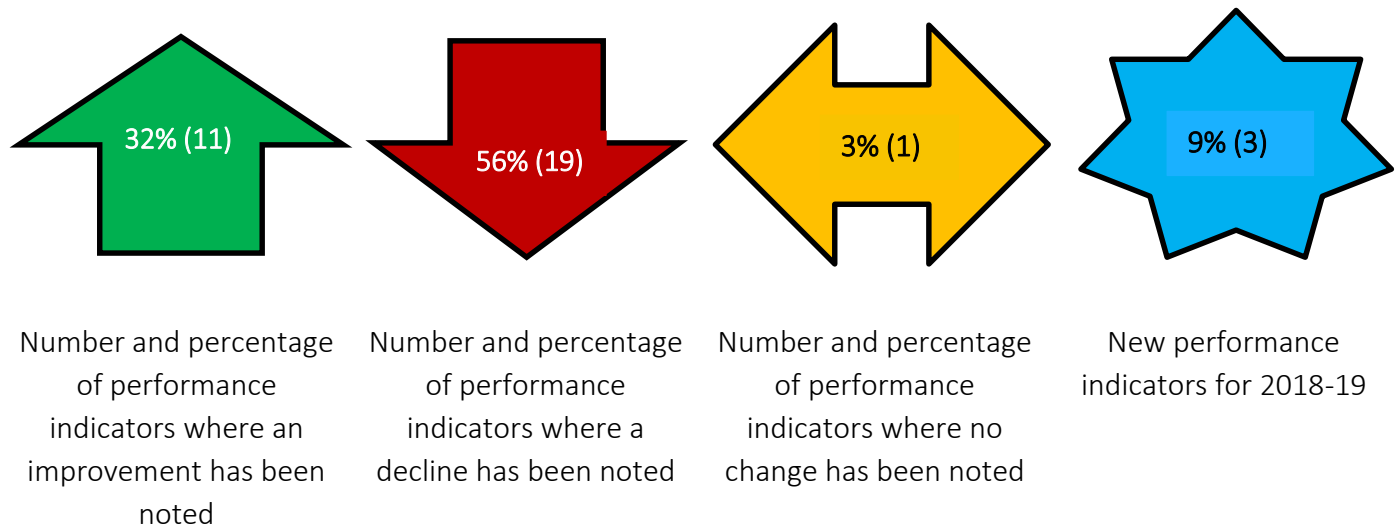
Contribution to the seven national wellbeing goals:



Clear evidence of the five ways of working:



Findings in relation to key performance indicators (KPIs):



	An innovative, productive and low carbon society which recognises the limits of the global environment and therefore uses resources efficiently and proportionately (including acting on climate change); and which develops a skilled and well-educated population in an economy which generates wealth and provides employment opportunities, allowing people to take advantage of the wealth generated through securing decent work.
	A nation which maintains and enhances a biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change (for example climate change).
A healthier Wales	A society in which people's physical and mental well-being is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood.
A more equal Wales	A society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances (including their socio economic background and circumstances).
A Wales of cohesive communities	Attractive, viable, safe and well-connected communities.
A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language	A society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language, and which encourages people to participate in the arts, and sports and recreation.
A globally responsible Wales	A nation which, when doing anything to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, takes account of whether doing such a thing may make a positive contribution to global well-being.

"ACTING TODAY FOR A BETTER TOMORROW"

The Wales we want:

A prosperous Wales	A resilient Wales	A healthier Wales	A more equal Wales	A Wales of cohesive communities	A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language	A globally responsible Wales
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The shared vision for Merthyr Tydfil to get there:

To strengthen Merthyr Tydfil's position as the regional centre for the Heads of the Valleys, and be a place to be proud of where:

People learn and develop skills to fulfil their ambitions,
People live, work, have a safe, healthy and fulfilled life,
People visit, enjoy and return.

How will Merthyr Tydfil CBC work?

Long Term



Prevention



Integration



Involvement



Collaboration

How will we work together to deliver the Our Shared Vision and achieve our goals?

Focus on the Future	PSB Wellbeing Plan	Political Priorities
Best Start to Life Children and young people have the best start to life and are equipped with the skills they need to be successful learners and confident individuals.	Community Resilience and Wellbeing To promote safe, confident, strong and thriving communities improving the wellbeing of residents and visitors and building on our community assets.	We will look after all our citizens by providing an affordable quality education and social care enabling everybody to lead their lives to their full potential.
Working Life People feel supported to develop the skills required to meet the needs of businesses with a developing, safe infrastructure making Merthyr Tydfil as an attractive destination.	Lifestyles, health and vulnerability To help people live long and healthy lives and overcome any challenges.	We will encourage active lifestyles and promote wellbeing.
Environmental Wellbeing Communities protect, enhance and promote our environment and countryside.	Economy and Infrastructure To grow a strong local economy with sustainable transport that attracts people to live, work and play in Cwm Taf.	We will support a strong, sustainable, diverse and successful environment and economy.
Living Well People are empowered to live independently within their communities, where they are safe and enjoy good physical and mental health.	Tackling loneliness and isolation (Cross cutting objective) We will work in new ways to channel the undoubted strengths of our communities, including volunteers to tackle more effectively the loneliness and isolation which often exists within many of them.	

*Merthyr Tydfil ... a place to be proud of
Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council*



Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol
MERTHYR TUDFUL
MERTHYR TYDFIL
County Borough Council