Wales Centre for Public Policy
Canolfan Polisi Cyhoeddus Cymru

2020
IN REVIEW

2020 AT A GLANCE
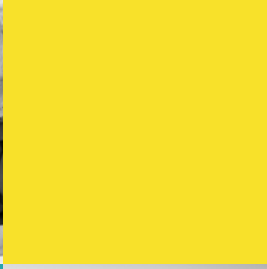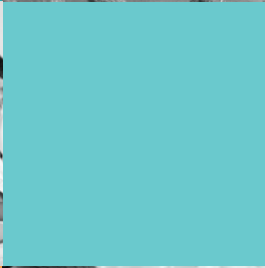
January
- Administering Social Security in Wales
- Public Engagement and 'A Healthier Wales'

February
- What do children and young people looked after and their families think about care?
- Engaging matters: making sure the public have a voice in the future of Welsh health and social care
- Delivering a Just Transition: what would it look like?
- The end of austerity and the beginning of Brexit
- What works in ageing better?

March
- International approaches to managing placement provision for children and young people looked after
- Increasing the impact of the What Works network across the UK
- Towards a resilient economy
- What we do and don't know about ageing better in Wales

April
- Loneliness in the lockdown
- Youth homelessness: moving towards prevention
- Does knowledge brokering facilitate evidence-based policy? A review of existing knowledge and an agenda for future research (Policy and Politics)

May
- Can Research Apprenticeships open the doors to a policy career?
- When this is all over: recovering from Coronavirus
- The implications of the Coronavirus pandemic for the Welsh economy
- PEP Talk Episode 5: Tackling loneliness and social isolation during lockdown

June
- Clapping after Coronavirus: the implications of the Coronavirus pandemic for health and social care workers
- Recovering from the Coronavirus pandemic: maintaining a legacy of volunteering
- The role of Welsh local government in a post-Coronavirus world
- Building back better: the importance of a green stimulus
- The Coronavirus pandemic – an opportunity for policy entrepreneurs?
- Financial vulnerability in the pandemic: a dilemma for local authorities
- The Coronavirus pandemic and the cost of health

July
- Planning for a prosperous, equal, and green recovery from the Coronavirus pandemic
- 20's the limit: how to encourage speed reductions
- How are we going to fund social care?
- Devolution and the Coronavirus pandemic in Wales: doing things differently, doing things together?

August
- The implications of Brexit for household incomes
- The vital role of tertiary education

September
- Policy options for Welsh fishing opportunities
- Children looked after in Wales
- Developing leaders in the public sector
- Domestic abuse interventions in Wales
- Our Future Wales consultation: Analysis of responses
- UK migration policy and the Welsh NHS workforce
- A Conversation on Wales' Future

October
- PEP Talk Episode 6: Tackling loneliness in and out of lockdown – the role of good communication
- What does Brexit mean for the Welsh health and social care workforce?

November
- Recovery from the Coronavirus pandemic
- Post-Brexit migration and Wales
- Supporting underrepresented groups into public appointments
- Increasing diversity in public appointments
- Building on strong foundations: the volunteer response to the pandemic in Wales
- Why diversity in public appointments matters
- Supporting mental health and wellbeing in fisherman and fishing communities
- Gradually and then all at once – The UK's new points-based migration system and small and medium enterprises

December
- Alternative models of Domiciliary Care
- Designing technology-enabled services to tackle loneliness
- Male Suicide
- The implications of the European transition for key Welsh economic sectors
- Using fishing opportunities to support mental health and wellbeing in the Welsh fishing industry
- What might implementation science and knowledge mobilisation mean for What Works Centres?
- Caring for the Care Sector: How Can We Support New Models of Home Care
- What matters in the implementation of sustainable development policies? Findings from the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act, 2015. (Journal of Environmental Policy & Planning)

Key
- Blog
- Event
- Podcast
- Report
- Journal Article

Introduction

2020 was the year when 'following the science' became a matter of life or death. Here at the Wales Centre for Public Policy we worked tirelessly with ministers and public service leaders to provide authoritative independent evidence, not just on the Coronavirus pandemic but on a wide range of other topics that lie at the heart of current policy debates.

Of course, much of our time was spent on the pandemic and the other great policy issue of the last twelve months - Brexit. We analysed the implications of the UK's departure from the European Union for trade, fisheries, migration, and the health and social care workforce. And we published a series of reports on the economic and social fallout of the pandemic and on strategies for building back better and fairer.

We also addressed some other important long-term challenges. Questions like:

• How to tackle loneliness and social isolation?

• How can we improve prospects for children and young people in local authority care?

• How do we ensure that older people receive the high-quality care at home that they deserve?

• What institutions and infrastructure will drive productivity and increase the resilience of the Welsh economy?

• How does Wales develop public service leaders of the future and ensure that those in senior positions reflect the diversity of the communities they serve?

In the last year, we have produced more than 60 reports and commentaries on these and other topics, together with policy briefings, podcasts, expert workshops and public events. We have worked closely with leading researchers from around the world and ensured that Wales continues to contribute to and benefit from the UK's What Works network.

Demand for and interest in our work has continued to grow and this is testimony to the dedication, skill and resilience of the whole team at the Wales Centre for Public Policy, as well as the support of our Advisory and Public Services Reference Groups and, most importantly of all, the commitment that ministers, officials and public service leaders have to ensuring that policies are informed by the best available evidence.

We thank them, our core funders - the Economic and Social Research Council and Welsh Government - and all of those who have worked with us in what proved to be an extraordinarily challenging, but highly productive, twelve months.

In 2020...

Our reports were downloaded **5678** times, **31% more** than in 2019

Traffic to our website increased by **more than 51%** compared to 2019 figures.

We gained **over 460** new Twitter followers and **371** new newsletter subscribers

About Us

The Wales Centre for Public Policy helps to improve policy making and public services by supporting ministers and public service leaders to access and apply rigorous independent evidence about what works. It works in partnership with leading researchers and policy experts to synthesise and mobilise existing evidence and identify gaps where there is a need to generate new knowledge.

The Centre is independent of government but works closely with policy makers and practitioners to develop fresh thinking about how to address strategic challenges in health and social care, education, housing, the economy and other devolved responsibilities.

The Centre:

• Supports Welsh Government Ministers to identify, access, and use authoritative evidence and independent expertise that can help inform and improve policy;

• Works with public services to access, generate, evaluate, and apply evidence about what works in addressing key economic and societal challenges; and

• Draws on its work with Ministers and public services, to advance understanding of how evidence can inform and improve policy making and public services and contribute to theories of policy making and implementation.

Through secondments, PhD placements and its Research Apprenticeship programme, the Centre also helps to build capacity among researchers to engage in policy relevant research which has impact.

For further information please visit our website at **www.wcpp.org.uk**
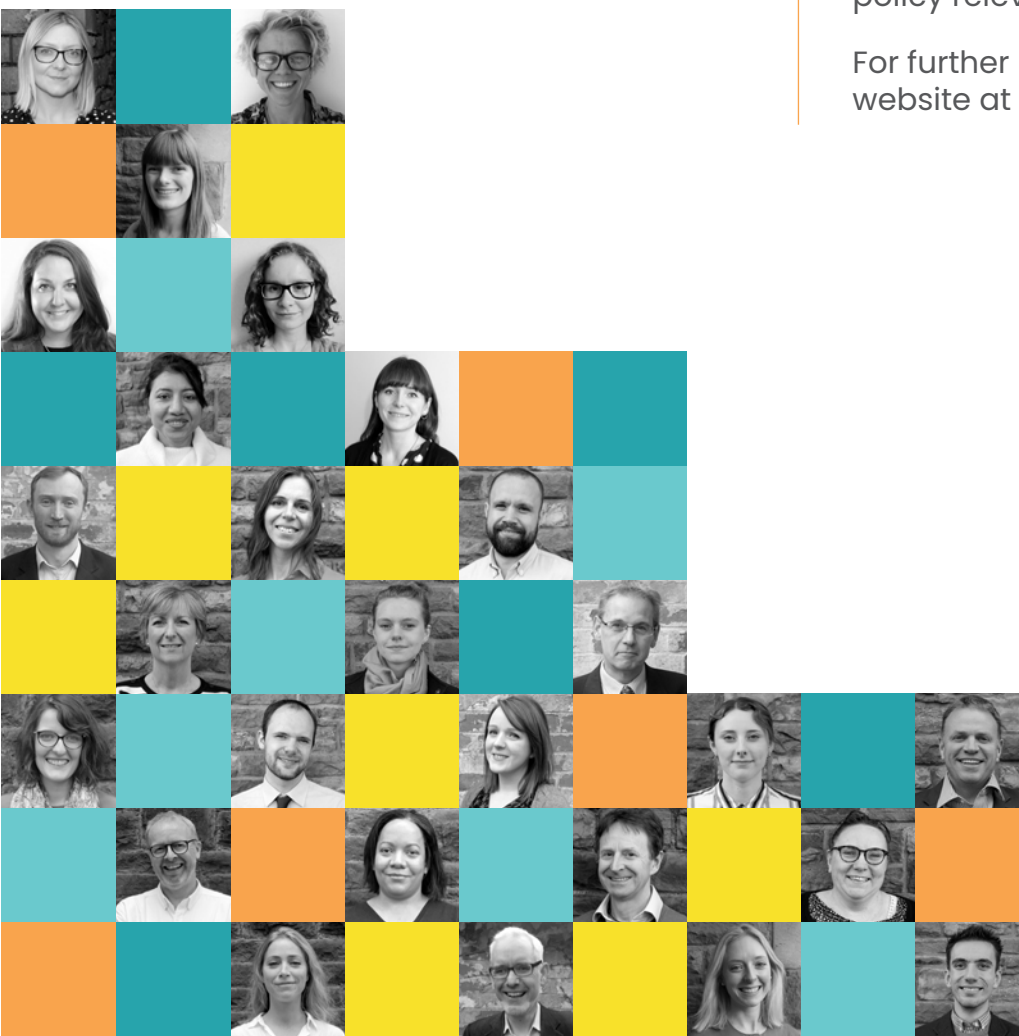
The impact of Brexit

To mark the UK's departure from the European Union on 31st January 2020, we invited Guto Ifan (from the Wales Governance Centre) and Gareth Williams (Special Adviser to the Welsh Government on Brexit and European Transition) to give keynote addresses at a conference that we convened on implications of Brexit for the economy and inter-governmental relations. Gareth highlighted the big political and policy implications facing Wales. Guto guided us through the implications for public finances.

The Economy

To help inform the Welsh Government's response to Brexit, our report on the implications of Brexit for key sectors of the Welsh economy highlighted the significant challenges and adjustments facing many businesses and the kinds of support which they will need in the short and longer term.

Fisheries

One of key sticking points in the EU-UK trade negotiations was the fishing industry. We examined the policy options for fishing opportunities in Wales post-Brexit, and how they align with the Well-being of Future Generations Act and the Environment Act. The report identified many of the problems for Welsh fishing that have subsequently hit the headlines and which are likely to be a focus of negotiations in years to come.

Household incomes

Our report on the implications of Brexit for household incomes and budgets in Wales identified the groups and parts of Wales that are particularly exposed to the combined risks associated with Brexit and the Coronavirus pandemic and recommended a series of actions to mitigate the impacts on them.

Economy and Work

Strengthening economic resilience

In the face of economic uncertainty, as a result of Brexit and the Coronavirus pandemic, policy makers need to know how to help strengthen the economic resilience of economies. Drawing on evidence from the UK, Europe and North America, our report examined the different kinds of resilience that Wales needs and policies that can help it to develop these.
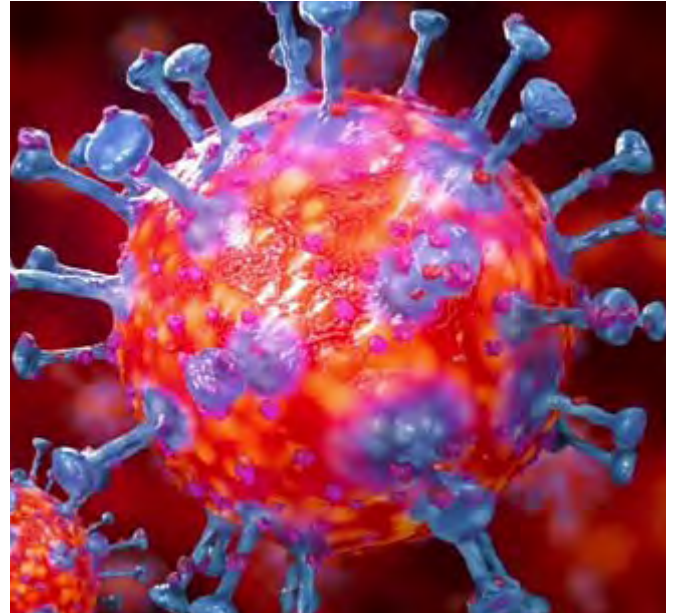
Recovery from the Coronavirus pandemic

Our report on support for indigenous businesses and low carbon growth argued that supporting the foundational economy and inward investment are mutually beneficial strategies that need to be pursued in tandem. It recommended providing incentives to localise supply chains and investment in skills and education and introducing migrant and graduate retention schemes so that indigenous businesses and inward investors have access to a pool of skilled workers.

In an accompanying report on human capital, skills, Further and Higher Education we showed the importance of pro-active labour market policies to support younger workers, women and those from BAME backgrounds who are on the lowest incomes, most likely to be working in jobs affected by the lockdown and at greatest risk of unemployment or underemployment. We recommended strategic investment in infrastructure, innovation, skills development and lifelong learning.

Children Looked After

There has been growing concern about the numbers of children entering care in Wales. The need for complex care packages has made it difficult and expensive to secure sufficient and suitable placements, and the outcomes for children and young people have often been poor.

Our report, Analysis of the Factors Contributing to the High Rates of Care in Wales, analysed the factors that are driving the overall increase and the significant variations between different parts of Wales. We found that much of the variation is attributed to deprivation (in particular the 'trigger trio' - domestic abuse, parental substance misuse and parental mental ill health). However, differences in the ways in which public services view risk and support families also play an important part.

We reviewed international evidence to identify ways to improve the quality and stability of placements in Wales and therefore produce better outcomes our children and young people. Our report on how children, young people and their birth families experience the care system identified a series of important findings for policymakers and practitioners. And our review international of practices focused on the commissioning of care placements. This highlighted the importance of balancing re-unification and permanence in placement practice, listening to the voice of the child and family in placement decisions, and achieving a combination of public, private and third sector provision.

Loneliness and Social Isolation

Eighteen months ago, we launched a programme of work analysing ways to reduce loneliness and social isolation and their impact on physical and mental health. The pandemic made this an even more pressing issue in 2020.

Our report, Loneliness in the Lockdown, showed how loneliness has increased among younger as well as older age groups and is having a detrimental impact on wellbeing particularly on adults living alone, people in bad health and those in poor housing.

Restrictions in place to prevent the spread of the Coronavirus made technology an important tool for connecting with others, and our podcast with Professor Julie Barnett (University of Bath) explored the role of technology in alleviating loneliness.

Our report, Designing technology-enabled services to tackle loneliness, showed that digital exclusion disproportionately affects groups that are vulnerable to loneliness, including older people and low-income households and recommended actions to address this.

Our podcast with Clare Delargy (Behavioural Insights Team) and Robin Hewings (Campaign to End Loneliness) explored the importance of meaningful, clear, and effective communication by government and public services, particularly during the lockdowns.

Local people, communities and the third sector in Wales have a big part to play and many have responded nimbly and innovatively to the pandemic. Our video explored the role of place-based grassroots and mutual aid groups in tackling loneliness at a neighbourhood level. We are now conducting further research to explore how communities have sought to tackle loneliness during the pandemic.

Environment and Sustainability

20's the limit: how to encourage speed reductions

In July 2020, the Senedd voted to introduce a 20mph default speed limit on all residential roads in Wales as part of a suite of measures to promote 'liveable' communities. Our report explores ways to encourage the substantial shift in driver attitudes and behaviour that will be needed for the limit to ensure compliance with this new legislation.

Recovery from the Coronavirus pandemic: Land management, travel and transport

The Coronavirus pandemic has changed the way many of us work, with home working becoming the new normal for many people. Our report on land management and travel identified ways to encourage more flexible working and the importance of changing travel to work patterns to reduce carbon emissions after the pandemic. It also highlighted the need for support to farmers to develop new skills to diversify the use of the land they manage in a way that is socially, economically, and environmentally viable and work with communities to develop a shared vision for the future.

Recovery from the Coronavirus pandemic: Renewable energy, housing and town centres

A green recovery from the pandemic will require re-thinking our energy usage, housing design and town centres. Our report explored ways in which the Welsh Government can encourage the repurposing of urban centres, boost renewable energy production, and increase and upgrade housing stock. It identified barriers to success, including existing planning policies and inadequate coordination among public bodies, and highlighted the importance of mobilising local communities to help shape the future of their areas.
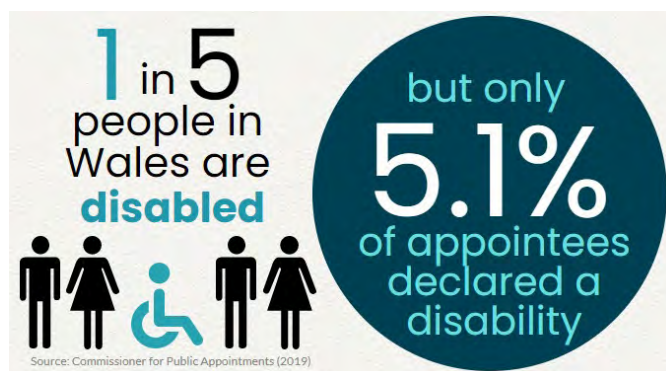
Social Justice and Equality

Recovery from the Coronavirus pandemic: Digital public services and intergenerational fairness

The Coronavirus pandemic has accelerated moves to online delivery of many public services. Our report on digital public services concluded that this has huge potential to transform health and social care for example through electronic health records, e-prescribing, shared care records, remote monitoring, and falls detectors. However, digital services are not appropriate for vulnerable patients requiring complex, multi-disciplinary care who will need to continue to have access to high quality in-person services.

Increasing diversity in public appointments

The boards of many public bodies in Wales do not reflect the communities they serve. Our report on increasing diversity, identified ways to support ethnic minority and disabled candidates to be successful in applying for public appointments and informed the Welsh Government's Diversity and Inclusion Strategy for public appointments. A second report considers how to provide better support for 'near miss' and potential candidates in underrepresented groups to apply for public appointments in Wales.

1 in 5 people in Wales are **disabled** but only **5.1%** of appointees declared a disability

Source: Commissioner for Public Appointments (2019)

Developing leaders in the public sector

We analysed existing approaches in Wales to developing future public service leaders and the role that AcademiWales can play in ensuring that all parts of the public sector have access to high-quality training and development and there is good support in place for aspiring leaders from non-traditional backgrounds.

Health and Adult Social Care

Evidence Use and Effective Policy Making

Domestic abuse interventions

1.6 million women in England and Wales experienced domestic violence in the year ending 2019. Our review of the evidence on interventions to address domestic abuse highlighted the need for a holistic approach to tackle the problems and improvements in the governance of refuge provision and other interventions.

Male Suicide

Men accounted for around three quarters of the total deaths by suicide in England and Wales in 2019, but male suicide risks being a forgotten issue. Our report explored the most at risk groups and the evidence about the factors that are driving increases in suicide rates among men.

Alternative models of domiciliary care

An ageing population means there is increasing demand for high-quality domiciliary care. Our review of international practice explored alternative models of care provision from other parts of the UK, the Netherlands, Sweden and Quebec that Wales might adapt in order to meet the needs of service users and address problems of staff recruitment and retention.

Recovery from the Coronavirus pandemic: Delivering and financing public services

Our report on delivering and financing public services in the future highlighted the importance of increasing procurement skills, promoting new models of social care and investing in financially sustainable, high quality and COVID-19-safe public transport.

Our Future Wales consultation: Analysis of responses

In May 2020, the Welsh Government invited members of the public to contribute their ideas for actions to support post-COVID-19 recovery and reconstruction. We analysed the key themes in the responses submitted by the public which included the need to tackle inequalities and provide high quality work as we emerge from the pandemic.

1.6M WOMEN

EXPERIENCED DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN ENGLAND AND WALES IN THE YEAR ENDING MARCH 2019

Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales (Nov 2019)

Our Advisory Group

The Centre benefits from the advice and support of an Advisory Group comprising distinguished individuals from academia, government and public services.

Stephen Aldridge is Director for Analysis and Data at the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

Professor Annette Boaz is a Professor in Health Care Research at the Centre for Health and Social Care Research at St George's University of London and Kingston University.

Professor Alice Brown is Chair of the Scottish Funding Council and Emeritus Professor of Politics at the University of Edinburgh.

Dr Carol Campbell is Director of the Knowledge Network for Applied Education Research-Rseau d'change des connaissances pour la recherche applique en education.

Dr Jane Davidson is a former Welsh Government minister and Pro-Vice Chancellor for External Engagement and Sustainability at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David.

Professor Sir Ian Diamond is the UK's National Statistician and former Principal and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Aberdeen.

Dr Ruth Hall is a non-executive director of Health Education and Improvement Wales and former Chief Medical Officer for Wales.

Professor Gerry Holtham is Hodge Professor of Regional Economy, Cardiff Metropolitan University.

Sir Peter Housden is a former Permanent Secretary of the Scottish Government.

Professor Ruth Hussey was Chief Medical Officer for Wales and chaired the Parliamentary Review of Health and Social Care in Wales.

Professor Paul Johnson is Director of the Institute for Fiscal Studies.

Abdool Kara is the Executive Leader of the Local Services at the National Audit Office and a former local authority chief executive.

Professor Laura McAllister is Professor of Public Policy and the Governance of Wales at Cardiff University's Wales Governance Centre.

Dr June Milligan is a Civil Service Commissioner and lay member of the governing body of the University of Glasgow and former Chair of the Wales Committee on Equality and Human Rights.

Professor Helen Patterson is the Chief Executive at Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council.

Professor Nick Pearce is Director of the Institute for Policy Research at the University of Bath and a former head of the No. 10 Policy Unit and the Institute for Public Policy Research.

Ceridwen Roberts is a former Senior Research Fellow at the University of Oxford's Department of Social Policy and Intervention.

Dame Dr Jane Roberts is a Research Fellow in Public Leadership at the Open University and the former Leader of the London Borough of Camden.

Michael Trickey is Honorary Senior Research Fellow at Cardiff University's Wales Fiscal Analysis team.

Professor Sir Adrian Webb chairs the Ministerial Advisory on the Economy and the Big Lottery Fund, Wales and is a former University Vice-Chancellor and Professor of Social Policy.

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