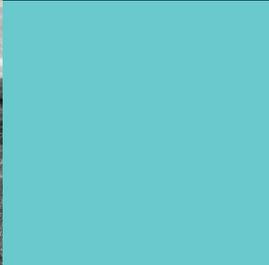
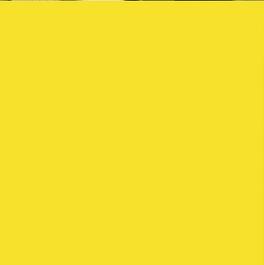
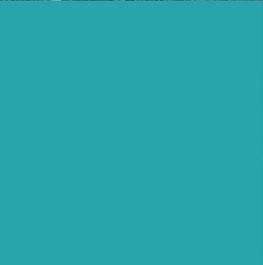
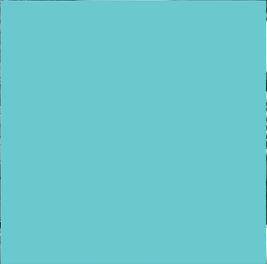
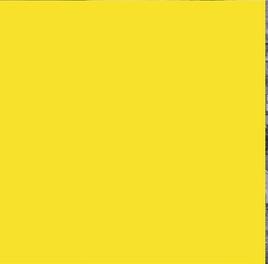
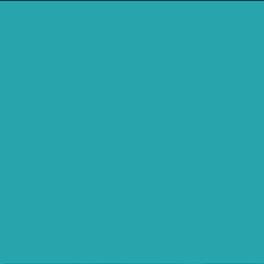
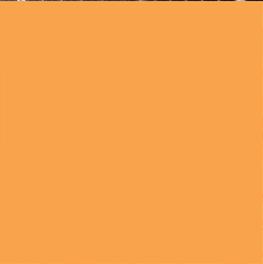
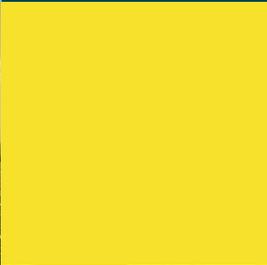
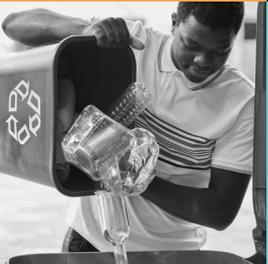
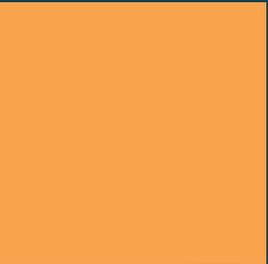




Wales Centre for Public Policy
Canolfan Polisi Cyhoeddus Cymru

2022 IN REVIEW



Key

-  Blog
-  Report
-  Event
-  Journal article
-  Podcast
-  Book chapter

Unless otherwise stated, all outputs are published on our [website](#)

January

-  Education recovery: Responding to the Coronavirus pandemic
-  Challenges and priorities for health and social care in Wales

March

-  Children's social services and care rates in Wales: A survey of the sector
-  Reform of electoral law and practice
-  'Levelling Up': A critical conversation for Wales
-  'Levelling Up': Continuing the conversation
-  Knowledge brokering organisations: a new way of governing evidence (Published in Evidence and Policy)

May

-  Infrastructure and long-term wellbeing
-  The impact of infrastructure on wellbeing in Wales
-  Infrastructure requirements for Wales to transition to a prosperous, sustainable economy
-  Infrastructure and wellbeing in Wales
-  Integrating wellbeing objectives into long-term infrastructure planning
-  Policy interventions to support participation in post-compulsory education

July

-  What is the role of evidence in shaping suicide prevention in Wales?
-  University policy engagement bodies in the UK and the variable meanings of and approaches to impact (Published in Research Evaluation)

September

-  Growth or degrowth for Wales?
-  Transforming our economy to tackle the climate emergency
-  Decarbonising Wales
-  International review of effective anti-poverty policies and programmes
-  Lived experience of poverty and social exclusion in Wales
-  International review of effective anti-poverty strategies
-  Review of poverty and social exclusion in Wales
-  Poverty and social exclusion: A way forward
-  Has devolution delivered?
-  What makes for an effective anti-poverty strategy
-  Running on empty: Why we need reform in the cost-of-living crisis
-  A matter of costs
-  Being poor in Wales – why where you live matters
-  Promoting pathways out of poverty – and preventing the pitfalls of poverty entry
-  Poverty and Mental Health

November

-  Understanding organisations that provide evidence for policy
-  What does 'blended' digital and face-to-face provision mean for access to services during the cost-of-living crisis?
-  The state of democracy in Wales: what is it and how can we measure it?
-  Blending delivery in community wellbeing services

2022 AT A GLANCE

 Should the age of participation in education or training be raised to 18 in Wales?

 We asked, you said, we did: assessing the drivers and effectiveness of an e-participation practice in Scotland (Published in Engaging Citizens in Policy Making)

February

 What Works Network implementation project

April

 Expanding post-compulsory education: What we've learned

 Reform of electoral law

June

 Developing skills for a just transition

 Finding a path to university as a mature student

 Blending online and offline provision in community wellbeing services: What does it mean and why does it matter?

 Supporting Lifelong Learning in Wales

 Accounting for what and to whom? Accountability tensions in collaborations addressing long-term unemployment (Published in Social Policy and Administration)

August

 Reducing waiting times in Wales

 National Milestones

 Evidence and An Anti-Racist Wales

 Taking stock of our Research Apprentice scheme

 Social care workforce in crisis in Wales: What is causing it and what is being done to fix it?

 What does the Welsh health and social care system look like?

 Are the Welsh Government's plans to the Welsh NHS Executive a missed opportunity?

 Waiting for care

 National Milestones – using evidence and expertise to tell a 'status story'

 What counts as evidence for policy? An analysis of policy actors' perceptions (Published in Public Administration Review)

October

 International approaches to a just transition

 Tackling poverty and mental health together: a multi-agency approach

 Welsh Basic Income Pilot Conference

December

Introduction

Welcome to our review of some of the highlights of the Wales Centre for Public Policy's work in 2022.

We have enjoyed another prolific twelve months and are grateful for the opportunities we have had to work with Ministers, public service leaders and colleagues in the civil service on some of the most important policy challenges facing Wales. We have continued to seek to strengthen the links between policy makers and academics, to increase understanding of ways to increase the role that evidence plays in policy making, and to nurture the next generation of policy researchers.

Much of our work has focused on tackling poverty and social exclusion which has been even more important in light of the cost of living crisis. We published a total of 18 reports on this topic, covering key issues including:

- Trends in poverty and social exclusion in Wales;
- The lived experience of poverty and social exclusion in Wales;
- What makes an effective anti-poverty strategy; and
- International evidence of what works when designing policies to tackle poverty and social exclusion.

Other policy challenges that we have worked on over the last year include:

- The social care crisis in Wales;
- Community wellbeing;
- Decarbonising the Welsh economy; and
- Electoral reform.

Our reports on these and other topics are available to download from our website, together with a range of commentaries, briefings, and podcasts. We hope that you enjoy them and find them informative and useful.

We want to thank our funders – the Economic and Social Research Council, Welsh Government, and Cardiff University – for their continued support. We are particularly grateful to our Advisory Group and Public Services Reference Group for their ongoing support and advice. And we acknowledge the excellent contributions made by the numerous experts, research organisations and other What Works Centres who we worked with in 2022 to provide policy makers and public service leaders with authoritative independent evidence that can help inform the decisions and choices they have to make.

In 2022...



Our reports were downloaded **6,964** times, **5.4%** more than in 2021.



We received over **28,000** visitors to our website.



We gained **over 300** new Twitter followers.

Our Remit

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. We work 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, equalities, the economy and skills, and a range of other devolved responsibilities.

We:

- Support Welsh Government Ministers to identify, access, and use authoritative evidence and independent expertise that can help inform and improve policy;
- Work with public services to access, generate, evaluate, and apply evidence about what works in addressing key economic and societal challenges; and
- Draw on our 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 our 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



Economy, Decarbonisation and Skills

Developing skills for a just transition

The transition to a low-carbon economy in Wales will affect workers and communities, particularly those with links to carbon-intensive industries. There is evidence that net-zero policies and environmental regulations may result in closures of some industries and the adoption of low-carbon processes in others. While there is likely to be an increased demand for both technical and 'soft' skills in new and existing industries, it is also likely that some jobs will no longer exist. This will determine the nature of the workforce demanded in new and existing industries, and the corresponding skill supply. Critical to this will be ensuring that the skills available in the workforce meet those demanded by employers.

Many workers and communities in Wales are poorly prepared for the transition to a decarbonised economy. Compared to other UK nations, Wales has a higher number of low-skilled workers, decreasing levels of participation in further education and apprenticeships, and a high-risk of job losses resulting from the closure of carbon-intensive industries.

We set out to identify opportunities to mitigate the social and economic impacts of the transition on workers and communities in Wales, particularly in areas likely to be hardest hit. [Our work](#) explores ways in which previous industrial transitions in the UK, and internationally, have been managed and highlights opportunities for skills institutions, industry leaders and representative bodies, the Welsh Government, and local authorities to incorporate lessons learnt into policy and regulatory approaches in Wales.

Decarbonisation and the Welsh economy

Efforts to decarbonise the Welsh economy and society are vitally important, but there is much debate about the practical implications of doing so. Fundamental questions need to be asked and choices need to be made about the future of Welsh society and the economy. For instance, should Wales promote new, green industries, taking advantage of new technologies and better industrial processes that can be exported and can drive economic growth? Or should Wales instead pursue a strategy of gradual 'degrowth' to reduce its impact on natural resources and increase the sustainability and resilience of local economies?

These choices go beyond technocratic decisions about how to achieve an agreed goal. Rather they involve political and economic choices about what the shape of the Welsh economy and the structure of Welsh society will look like in the future. It is important to articulate these choices, so that the public can choose which to endorse, and to enable policymakers to take a longer-term, strategic perspective. This will require actions to be taken to build this future vision.

We've published three [diverse expert opinion pieces](#) on some of the key questions surrounding decarbonisation, each highlighting why their position should be adopted by the Welsh Government and public services in Wales.

Children and Families

Children's social services and care rates in Wales: a survey of the sector

Wales has seen a rise in both the number and rate of children looked after. The rate is now higher than any time since the 1980s. In addition, Wales has consistently had more children looked after per 10,000 of the population than the rest of the UK.

This trend is a cause for concern; particularly the impact on the outcomes of children who are taken into care in terms of educational attainment, health, unemployment, homelessness, and criminal justice. And the fall-out from the Covid-19 pandemic is expected to have worsened the situation.

Building on our earlier work on this important issue, we surveyed almost 800 professionals working in children's social care to discover what they believe is driving this increase.

[Our report](#) finds that variations in local values and practices play a key role and help to explain the significant differences in rates between local authorities. We also provide a snapshot of practitioners' views of the impact of pandemic.



Promoting Equality

Poverty and social exclusion review

Poverty and social exclusion are major issues in Wales, with 45% of Welsh households never having enough money for anything other than the basics.

The Welsh Government commissioned us to conduct a review of international poverty and social exclusion strategies, programmes and interventions. Working with colleagues at the New Policy Institute, LSE's Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion, and expert advisors based in Wales, we produced a total of 18 reports which looked at a variety of issues affecting poverty and social exclusion:

- [A review of international poverty and social exclusion strategies](#), concluding with a checklist of what makes an effective anti-poverty strategy.
- [Reviews of international evidence on the effectiveness of policies and programmes](#) that aim to tackle poverty and social exclusion.
- [Two reports on poverty and social exclusion in Wales](#). The first report reviews quantitative evidence to provide an overview of past, current, and possible future trends in poverty and social exclusion in Wales. The second report reviews secondary qualitative evidence relating to the lived experience of poverty and social exclusion in Wales.
- [A report outlining the results of four workshops conducted by WCPP](#) across Wales involving people with direct lived experience of poverty and social exclusion.
- [An overview report](#) that aims to bring together the significant amount of evidence produced for the project to frame and inform Welsh Government discussions on 'what next'.

We also published a number of blogs which examined the wider context of poverty in Wales, including the strain poverty can have on mental health, why where you live can have a huge impact, and the importance of easing financial pressures on household budgets.

You can also listen to our [PEP Talk podcast](#) where Dr Anna Skeels talks to Emma Gooding (Samaritans), Mike Theodoulou (Foothold Cymru), and Marcel Vige (Mind) about poverty in Wales, and the negative effect it can have on mental health.



Levelling Up

In early 2022, the UK government published its eagerly anticipated White Paper on 'Levelling Up'. But what does it mean for Wales? Our blogs examined this in further detail. [The first blog](#), by Dr Helen Tilley, argues that we urgently need to address three fundamental institutional issues: a fragmented funding system, a lack of coordination, and short-termism. [The second blog](#), by Dr Anna Skeels, shows the importance of ensuring that levelling up funding reaches the people and communities that are most in need and argues that this calls for a place-based approach focused on tackling poverty and inequality.

Health and Social Care

Challenges and priorities for Health and Social Care in Wales

The challenges facing health and social care in Wales are complex and multifaceted. In partnership with Kaleidoscope Health and Care, we conducted a review of the systemic and workforce issues affecting the delivery of the health and care service, as well as the specific health challenges faced by the Welsh population which place pressure on the system.

[Our report](#) presents the ten key priorities for the Welsh health and social care sector identified through interviews and desk research, ranging from the need to rebalance the incentives to drive improvements within the system; to the need to improve the data collection and analysis relating to workforce planning. Out of the ten priorities, three areas were identified by senior leaders that could make the biggest difference to the Welsh health and social care sector, once current winter and pandemic-related pressures subside:

- Supporting leadership and instilling management processes for transformational change.
- Recruiting, training, supporting, and developing the right workforce.
- Sustaining agility in decision making from the pandemic.



Reducing waiting time in Wales

The number of people on NHS Wales waiting lists for treatment has reached record levels. This problem has worsened since the Covid-19 pandemic, with the average wait time for treatment more than doubling since December 2019. While performance against the Welsh Government's waiting times targets has worsened, the underlying causes pre-date the pandemic, and can be attributed to changing population health needs, workforce shortages, and increasing demand for NHS services. Ensuring a sustained reduction in waiting times from referral to treatment will therefore require a system-wide change which addresses issues relating to funding, service delivery, staffing, and patient care. This will include changes to governance and financing structures, as well as ways of working.

[Our review](#) of literature and discussion with healthcare providers, researchers, and government officials identified five key areas in which policy could improve outcomes and reduce waiting times.

Loneliness and Connected Communities

Infrastructure and long-term wellbeing

Physical infrastructure has considerable influence on long-term wellbeing. It enables services which are essential to both economic prosperity and wider societal wellbeing, in particular those services and systems which enable global communications and the movement of key resources, such as energy, transport, water, waste, and information and communications technology.

Individuals and communities depend on effective, well-functioning infrastructure systems for a wide range of wellbeing outcomes. On the flipside, poorly planned and delivered infrastructure can have disastrous impacts on people and the environment, accelerating environmental degradation and carbon emissions, and deepening socioeconomic vulnerabilities.

Our report analyses which infrastructure investments have the greatest potential for positive impacts on wellbeing. It highlights the implications of different ways of evaluating wellbeing, the trade-offs which policy makers face between short and long-term benefits, and the importance of place-based approaches which take account of local needs and priorities.

Accompanying commentaries by leading experts in the field discuss the importance of integrating wellbeing into decisions about infrastructure planning, transport policy, and the transition to a net-zero carbon Wales.



Blended services

Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, public and third sector organisations supporting community wellbeing have relied on a mixture of remote and face-to-face methods for delivering services and engaging with the people they support. While surrounding debate can sometimes focus on the strengths and weaknesses of digital 'versus' face-to-face provision in a binary way, emergent in the wider discussion about pandemic recovery and transition is a growing attention to 'hybrid' or 'blended' approaches: the ways in which digital and face-to-face delivery might interact; and the implications of this for public and third sector services and the people and communities they serve.

In 2022 we published two blogs exploring these issues. In the first blog, Rosie Havers looks at 'blending' online and offline provision in community wellbeing services, asking what does it mean, and why does it matter. In the second blog Rosie asks what 'blended' digital and face-to-face provision mean for access to services during the cost-of-living crisis.

Governance and Implementation

Reform of electoral law and practice

Responsibility for running elections was devolved to Wales through the Government of Wales Act 2017. Since then, Welsh Ministers have embarked on a programme of electoral reform most noted by the extension of the franchise to 16 and 17 year-olds and qualifying foreign citizens for Senedd and local government elections. The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act also provided the legislative framework for future electoral reform, particularly around automatic registration and the optional use of Single Transferable Voting at local government elections.

We researched how changes in electoral administration have affected turnout internationally, to inform Welsh Government decisions in this area and suggest possible areas of improvement. There were four areas of focus: candidate and agent safety; innovative electoral practice; campaign finances and spending; early voting.

In our first live-recorded episode of PEP Talk, Dr Larissa Peixoto Vale Gomes talked to Professor Laura McAlister (Wales Governance Centre) and Colin Everett (former Chief Executive of Flintshire County Council) about how electoral practices can be innovated, how candidate safety can be improved, how campaign finances and spending can be made more transparent, and the benefit and pitfalls of early voting.





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