# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE** | **Sustainable development in Wales and beyond: measuring our progress** |
| **DATE** | **10 November 2023** |
| **BY** | **Jane Hutt, Minister for Social Justice and Chief Whip** |

[The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act](https://www.gov.wales/well-being-future-generations-act-essentials-html) 2015 put into legislation Welsh Government’s long-held belief that development in Wales must be sustainable – good for the people who live in Wales now and good for those people who will call Wales home in the future. The Welsh Government believes in making long-term decisions that will help all our people to live better, longer lives without undermining nature’s ability to sustain itself and us. We are also committed to doing this while meeting our global responsibilities and making sure our cultural heritage continues to thrive.

The [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](https://sdgs.un.org/goals) set out the ways in which governments across the globe can work to improve the lives of their citizens and look after natural systems. The seventeen goals represent a shared global purpose to tackle some of humanities biggest challenges - including eliminating poverty and hunger, creating gender equality, providing quality education, good health, and well-being.

Wales is the only country in the world to have legislated for the Sustainable Development Goals through our Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The Act establishes national well-being goals and a sustainable development principle which helps us deliver integrated, preventative, long-term decisions born out of collaboration across public, private and third sector partnerships and the involvement of those people who will be affected by the outcomes.

Our knowledge in this area is a great global export. The Act provides a framework for us to share our experience and tell Wales’ story to the world. Through it, we can promote our values on the international stage, fulfilling one of the key ambitions of our [International Strategy](https://www.gov.wales/overseas-network-annual-report-2022-to-2023-html), to be a globally responsible Wales. But we are not complacent. Both in Wales and on a global level, the Sustainable Development Goals continue to be a challenge to deliver, especially as the impacts of international crises make themselves felt at home and around the world.

As part of our ongoing commitment to sustainable development in Wales we publish the annual [Wellbeing of Wales](https://www.gov.wales/wellbeing-wales) report, which allows us to look at how people and places in Wales are changing and to reflect on our progress towards meeting national milestones. The [2023 report](https://www.gov.wales/wellbeing-wales-2023) was published on 28 September. With inflation rising sharply during the last year, resulting in reductions in people’s real incomes, the impact on the cost-of-living features regularly throughout the report. Analysis suggests that the impact of the crisis has been felt most severely by people on low incomes. There is also evidence this year that children and young people are faring worse in some areas since the pandemic than adults. Rising household energy costs have been a notable feature of the last couple of years and this has led to an increase in the percentage of households in fuel poverty.

Overall, the report shows that life is challenging for many groups and individuals and that some of these challenges have been made worse by the COVID-19 pandemic and the cost-of-living crises. But the report also shows that we have made long-term progress in areas such as air quality, regular participation in sport by adults, waste generation and recycling rates, and a reduction in our national global footprint. I am pleased that this year, we have published a [supplementary report that, for the first time focuses specifically on ethnicity and wellbeing](https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/statistics-and-research/2023-09/wellbeing-wales-2023-ethnicity-and-well-being-108.pdf). The supplementary report brings together evidence to explore progress towards the wellbeing goals for different ethnic groups. Alongside other types of evidence this supplementary report can be used to help inform decision making to meet our well-being goal of creating a more equal Wales.

As we mark our own progress towards our own national milestones, the United Nations continues to monitor and drive global progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. On 18-19 September, leaders and representatives met in New York for the [Sustainable Development Goals summit](https://www.un.org/en/conferences/SDGSummit2023), marking the half-way point in a planned fifteen-year delivery plan to meet the goals. Here, delegates heard that only 15 per cent of these goals are on track, and leaders re-committed to accelerate progress towards the goals leading up to 2030. We support the international outreach work of the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales, who represented Wales in New York at a series of events around the summit, including presenting Welsh case studies to the UN Development Programme. We were also encouraged to see our partners in the [Regions4](https://regions4.org/) group attend the summit and wider events to amplify the perspectives of regions across the world and accelerate regional climate change action.

In Wales, we remain steadfast in our commitment to contributing to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and we welcome the renewed call to deliver on the goals. We share the ambition to transform the world for people, planet, and prosperity and we feel proud to be able to share our experience in Wales to a global audience. We remain vigilant to the present and future challenges and are determined to play our part in meeting them.