

CWM TAF WELL-BEING ASSESSMENT



CWM TAF PUBLIC SERVICES BOARD

March 2017



***Disclaimer:** The data included in this document is correct as of March 2017. The Cwm Taf Well-being Assessment is a 'live' document and any planning and/or delivery of services undertaken with reference to this document will use the most up to date iteration of that data, as appropriate. The data in the Assessment continues to undergo independent quality assurance.*

WHAT IS A WELL-BEING ASSESSMENT?

This report forms part of the first Well-being Assessment for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf (Cwm Taf). The purpose of this Assessment is to provide a picture of the current state of well-being in Cwm Taf. This includes what the data and evidence are telling us and what people have told us about what well-being means to them.

As public services in Cwm Taf, we are trying to change the way we work together and the way we work with people in our communities, to improve well-being. This Assessment will help us to understand the good things we have done so far and the challenges we face. It will help us to plan together; make decisions; and change processes, services and how money is spent. By improving the ways in which we do things together we will be able to have a greater impact on the well-being of people who live and work in Cwm Taf.

For the first time, public services across Wales have a legal duty to work together in this way; with the people of Wales, for our future well-being. This duty is set out in the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act](#). The Act includes seven national well-being goals, which we have to contribute to achieving:

Figure 1: Well-being Goals of Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act








In contributing to these goals, public services in Cwm Taf will need to make sure that everything we do is designed and delivered in a way that helps to improve the cultural, economic, environmental and social well-being of people and communities of Wales, now and in the future.

Under each theme, there is scope to improve well-being in Cwm Taf in different ways. By addressing particular issues relating to each of the well-being themes,

we will be able to contribute to the national well-being goals. It is important to remember that our contribution to the goals will be made through the overall improvements we are able to make to well-being through all four of these themes.

We must contribute to these goals, by working in five particular ways. Together, these make up the ‘sustainable development principle’:

-  Thinking about the long term;
-  Looking to prevent problems;
-  Looking to contribute towards the Act’s seven Well-being Goals and the goals of their own and other organisations;
-  Working better with each other; and
-  Working better with people and communities.

The Act is helping to change the way we work in Cwm Taf. This way of working is now officially at the heart of everything that public services do across Wales.

Welsh Government is currently seeking views on a Local Government White Paper (a report which sets out proposals on particular issues for consideration and comment). The White Paper is called [Resilient and Renewed](#). It sets out how public services and their partners, including communities, will deliver some of their services together. The particular ways of working described above, then, are featuring in more and more national plans. Public services must make sure that the same is true of local planning and working.

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act is described as the ‘common sense Act,’ due to these ways in which public services must work. We must:

Work together to use what we have to improve our services and communities.

This might not always be the way that all public services currently work. This Assessment will help us to understand what we have in Cwm Taf, what we do well and what needs to be improved. It is a different way of working, but it is a difference that needs to be embraced if we want to improve well-being and create a better Wales for future generations. This work is ongoing and this Assessment provides us with a starting point to set priorities and plan future services.

Public services will need to consider the findings of this Well-being Assessment when setting objectives for future service design and delivery. This includes how the objectives we set as individual organisations reflect the Assessment and how the outcomes of the Assessment are integrated into corporate planning and organisational strategies. It also includes working together as public services and the objectives we set collectively, which can only be addressed through working in partnership. The Public Services Board must publish a Well-being Plan (by April 2018) which sets out the steps we will take to achieve these objectives.

Under another Welsh Government Act, called the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act, public services must carry out another assessment, called the Cwm Taf Population Assessment. This assessment is about people with care and support needs in Cwm Taf and what needs to be done to meet those needs.

These two important assessments have been carried out by the same officers in Cwm Taf. We have been looking at data and information and speaking to people, to gather information and views. This will help to make sure that the findings of both assessments, together, create a *full* picture to help us plan what to do next.

Other national and local policies and strategies have also been taken into account when writing this Assessment, including the views of the independent Commissioners for Wales and relevant Welsh Government policies, such as the Child Poverty Strategy and the Tackling Poverty Action Plan.

USING THIS REPORT

This report contains the ‘headline’ information of the Cwm Taf Well-being Assessment. If you are interested in learning more about the headline information in this report, this can be found in the briefing documents which accompany this report. The briefing documents look at the cultural, social, economic and environmental well-being of Cwm Taf in more detail, including statistics and views from people who have taken part in the conversation so far.

Each level of this Assessment is supported by a more detailed level of data and information. This is held on the Our Cwm Taf Portal, which you might also like to browse through. You can also click on the links in this document ([the words underlined and in blue](#)), which will take you to other related documents or websites.

Figure 2: Structure of Cwm Taf Well-being Assessment



Through the [Understanding Our Communities](#) project, we spoke to people who live and work in Cwm Taf, people who use public services, people who work in public services, community groups and anyone else who wanted to have their say. This information was analysed for common things that people thought were important or wanted to talk about.

The work being done in Cwm Taf, particularly around getting more people and communities involved in the conversation, has been welcomed by Welsh Government and by the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales (an independent role set up to advise, encourage and promote the duty of public services and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act). We are proud of the new and exciting ways we are making sure that people and communities are able to have their say and have written about the work we are doing in a separate report.

This work is being led by the Cwm Taf Public Services Board. This Board is made up of the leaders and senior managers of organisations in Cwm Taf, including:

- [Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council](#);
- [Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council](#);
- [Cwm Taf University Health Board](#);
- [Natural Resources Wales](#);
- [South Wales Fire and Rescue Service](#);
- [Interlink RCT](#);
- [Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil](#);
- [South Wales Police](#);
- [National Probation Service](#);

- [South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner](#);
- [Community Rehabilitation Company](#); and
- [Welsh Government](#).

The Cwm Taf Public Services Board is one of only two merged Board in Wales. The fact that we have one Board in Cwm Taf (rather than one per local authority area) shows that there is already excellent progress being made to work effectively in partnership across organisations. The members of the Board have a legal duty to act together for the social, cultural, economic and environmental well-being of the people in the area.

In order to do this, we must first understand how good well-being is now. This will help us to know where the differences between communities are and the extent of the changes that need to be made.

OUR POPULATION

Cwm Taf is made up of two local authority areas; Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf. There are 295,865 people living in Cwm Taf; 20% of the population lives in Merthyr Tydfil and 80% lives in Rhondda Cynon Taf. More people live here than live in other places of the same size in Wales, but our population is not expected to rise as much as other areas in the next twenty years. By 2039 our population is predicted to rise to 304,543.

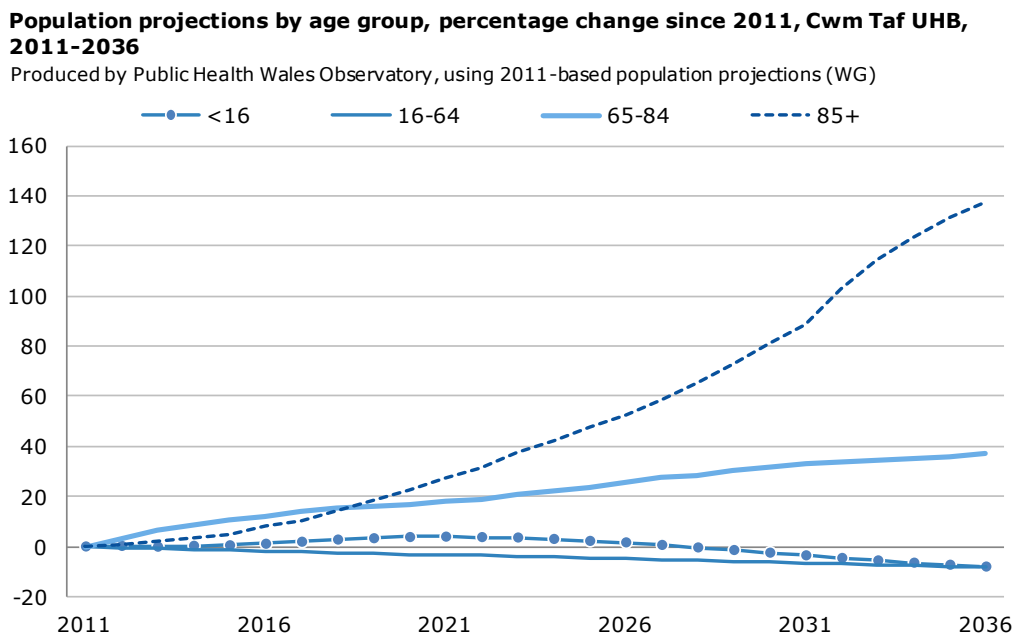
Table 1: Population Projection (2039)

	Estimated population 2014	Projected population in 2039 (based on 2014 estimate)	Estimated variance in projected population 2014 to 2039 (+/-)	Estimated percentage variance in projected population 2014 to 2039 (+/-)
Merthyr Tydfil	59,065	58,062	-1,003	-1.7
Rhondda Cynon Taf	236,888	246,481	+9,593	+4.0
Cwm Taf	295,865	304,543	+8,678	+2.9

Source: Stats Wales

By 2036, our total population aged 64 years and under will decrease, but the numbers aged 65 years and over will grow significantly, with the biggest increase being in those aged 85 years and over.

Figure 3: Population projections by age group



FUTURE TRENDS

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act is about changing the ways in which we design and deliver services now to have a positive impact not just on the well-being of the people living and working in Cwm Taf now, but on the well-being of the people who will live and work here in the future.

Through this Well-being Assessment, we have gathered information about what is important to the well-being of the people of Cwm Taf and what might it in different ways. Because we understand this, we can be more confident about how well-being might be affected in the future.

There is still work to be done around fully understanding what future trends in Cwm Taf will look like. There is work being carried out nationally to understand what the key factors which affect well-being are and we will be able to build on this in Cwm Taf in due course to inform planning and priorities.

OUR COMMUNITY AREAS

In carrying out this Well-being Assessment in Cwm Taf, we looked at different ways in which to split the region by area, to explore and compare well-being in different places. Lots of the numbers-based data that is available is measured by different public services, which all split the geography in different ways. So, there isn't one particular way to line up *all* the data in the same way.

Communities in Cwm Taf have their own identities, shaped by the people and things in them. In doing this Assessment, we talked to people who live, work and use services across Cwm Taf. Most of the data gathered is for Merthyr Tydfil or Rhondda Cynon Taf, but we need to look at what this data means on a smaller scale again for it to tell us more about individual communities.

Statistics tell us that there are differences across Cwm Taf, such as differences in life expectancy, levels of poverty, how people get around, natural surroundings and housing. These are some of the things that form a backdrop to how we will deliver services in future.

We have looked at well-being under the four themes in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act (cultural, economic, environmental and social). We can take what we have learned through this Assessment and apply it to communities in different areas when planning and delivering future work. We will be able to use this Assessment to approach our work with a good understanding of well-being and explore how we can improve it in particular communities.

The data available to us will not always match the same boundaries as our community areas exactly, but this is more about using what we can to build our understanding of the things that affect well-being in particular areas. This will need to continue to be done together with communities.

As our understanding and the things that affect well-being change, we might decide that we need to look at community areas differently in the future (for example, we are already looking at setting up ‘community zones,’ to help us consider how well-being could to be improved in different ways in different areas, across Cwm Taf).

This Assessment will help us to look at the best ways to come together as public services and work with communities to make sure that what we do and how we do it has the best possible effect on well-being.

WHAT IS WELL-BEING?

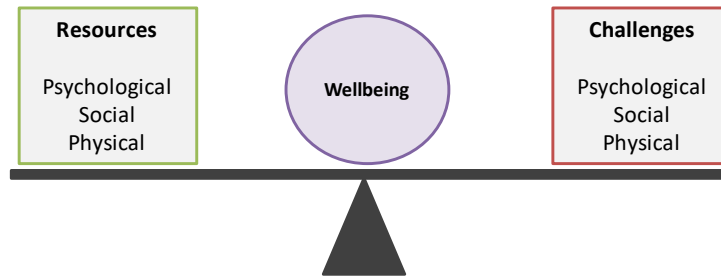
People have tried to define well-being in different ways, but it is complicated. Words such as ‘happiness,’ ‘life satisfaction,’ ‘positive relationships’ and ‘realising potential’ have all been used to describe some of the things that make up well-being. However, as our starting point for this Assessment we have used the following definition,¹ where well-being is:

¹ Dodge R, Daly A, Huyton J & Saunders L. (2012) The challenge of defining wellbeing, *International Journal of Wellbeing*, 2 (3), 22-235

“The balance point between an individual’s resource pool and the challenges they face.”

In life, we face challenges every day. Well-being is when people have the psychological, social and/or physical resources they need to meet a particular psychological, social and/or physical challenge. When people have more challenges than resources, the see-saw dips, along with their well-being.

Figure 4: Model of well-being (Dodge et al 2012)



This definition can be applied to all individuals, regardless of age, gender or culture. It allows for the idea that each individual has their own resource pool which affects how they personally cope with challenges and experience well-being. It is also optimistic and shows how people can use their resources to take control of their lives when their see-saw dips.

Through the evidence we have gathered in this Well-being Assessment, we can see that there are some key resources which relate to well-being. These are the things that the people we talked to identified as important to their well-being:

- Well-being is improved when we feel like we belong;
- Well-being is improved when we know what to get involved in and how to get involved;
- Well-being is improved when we connect with each other and the world around us;
- Well-being is improved when we make the most of what we already have; and
- Well-being is improved when we are smart about the things we want to change.

We can see that these important well-being resources very closely align with the sustainability principle (five ways of working) of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act, described above. People explained more about these resources and we will now look at each of them in more detail:

Belonging

Feeling part of, or like you belong to, a community makes a huge difference to well-being. A 'community' does not have to mean where we live; it can mean family, people we do things with (like a team or club), or people we have things in common with (like language or job).

By joining in with other people, we may find ourselves doing something new, learning something or going somewhere we enjoy, or that opens doors to new friends, new skills and better well-being.

Strong community can last for many years. By coming together in this way, communities can make sure that they are a part of what is being done and how it is being done in their area.

Public services call this 'community cohesion' (meaning bringing people together and people working together). It is the idea that people with different interests, knowledge and opinions coming together are able to make much more of a difference than lots of smaller groups, or individuals, trying to make a difference alone.

In doing this Assessment, we have talked to people, communities and services across Cwm Taf. We have started to think about the differences between areas, what well-being means in different areas and how it might be improved. Once we start to plan for our future services, we will look in more detail at the individual areas. What we have learnt from this Assessment will help us to prioritise what is needed in different areas.

Many communities in Cwm Taf have a very strong sense of community spirit. This lets us know that these connections and the people who are able to bring others together are in our communities. We need to support them to make the most of the opportunities to bring a sense of belonging to their communities.

Knowing

If a person or community wants to do something, get involved in something, or needs help, advice or support with a problem, one of the most obvious things that could stop them doing this is not knowing what is out there, or not knowing how to get involved in it.

Some people may want to get involved in activities or services and they need to feel confident that they have the right information, or can get information easily. We have heard from many groups of people that want to make a difference to well-being but do not know where to start, which can be frustrating. We need to make sure that there are as few things stopping people from getting involved as possible.

What we do know is that there are more opportunities, activities, clubs, groups, teams, classes and information which can help well-being in our communities than we could ever possibly keep track of. What is available is always changing and our public services need to understand the best ways of sharing information and what can really help people.

We need to think about the *ways* in which knowledge is shared, rather than simply making information available in the ways we have in the past. The most obvious way to understand and share this information is through the people who know Cwm Taf and what is going on here best; those who live and work in our communities.

Connecting

It is all well and good knowing what we want and to know how to get to it, but the next challenge is actually being *able* to get to it.

The geography of Cwm Taf (the landscape, towns and travel routes) means that it is not always easy to get to where we need to go, so we need to look at getting around in different ways. This might be walking or cycling routes. We also need to think about how to make our buses and trains better at helping people get to where they need to be. We can also connect to each other in different ways, like through social media or online communities.

Many people told us that the links in our communities are good and we need to use these to help us to create stronger connections, which reach further and bring more people together. We also need to make sure that the links between communities and public services are strong and that our public services are helping in the right ways.

Using what we have

We should start with what we already have. We have already identified the things that are going on in Cwm Taf and we need to build on them in the future. Pride in our communities and what we are doing can be made even better by looking at what we have around us and using our local assets. These things might be different in every village, town and community.

We also already have our Cwm Taf Public Services Board. The establishment of this Board means that all the organisations which can help make a difference to well-being are already sitting around the same table. Now, we must make sure that we all understand what the role of public services might be, what the role of the community might be, where the gaps are, what will work and how they can make that possible together.

Changing what we can

There are some things which will mean big opportunities and exciting changes to our lives and communities, but we need to consider starting small and building on what we already know works. It is about taking the opportunities to work together more effectively. This might be making the most of money or time to really get something right and working together to make a real difference to people and their communities.

Public services have already started to explore how we can work together differently in Cwm Taf and these resources are things that make sense and things we all agree with. Well-being can be improved and protected in the future if we know how to make a difference and make it as soon as possible, before things start or get worse.

WELL-BEING IN CWM TAF

To help measure some of the things which make up well-being, the Welsh Government has set out [national indicators](#). At this stage, not all of the data is available for the indicators required, but we have used these as a starting point. We have also used research, data and conversations to build a wider understanding of what these well-being themes mean in Cwm Taf.

We have organised the information into four briefing documents; cultural well-being, economic well-being, environmental well-being and social well-being, aligning with the themes of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act.

Under each theme, we have focused on the good things which are already happening in our services and communities. These are our resources or 'assets' and they could be buildings, outdoor areas, our natural environment, businesses, opportunities, people; anything that can be used to make community well-being better. This is called an asset based approach. This way of working will help public services and communities to have a better understanding of the assets we have and how we might use them in our work.

We do not yet fully understand the extent of all the assets we have or how to use them most effectively. We need to understand what communities regard as assets and how we can use these to improve well-being.

Each section also looks at challenges identified through the data and from what we were told:

Cultural well-being in Cwm Taf

Language, history, music, theatre, writing, dance, art, sport, festivals, media and politics are all part of the culture of Cwm Taf. If we are thinking about belonging

to a community, this is a good place to start. Community spirit connects people, makes them happy and improves well-being and culture is at the heart of this.

The landscape, buildings, natural environment and languages spoken in Cwm Taf are the things that help people feel like they belong, which has a positive effect on happiness and well-being.

Many people in Cwm Taf think that having family and friends close by is good for well-being. For people who do not have friends and family close by, getting involved in cultural activities is a great way to make new friends or connect with people in a different way, such as online or through social media. There are many activities and groups which bring people together, such as dancing, parent and toddler groups, community classes/clubs, church groups, sports teams, choirs and older people's dinners. All of this is going on in Cwm Taf. A lot of this happens on a very local level (known as 'grassroots'), which shows that people do have the knowledge and the connections to make this happen.

People enjoy coming together for a common reason and taking part in or organising activities like this can make a difference to community well-being. Being part of a group that shares interests, or speaks the same language, can help people to feel they belong to something bigger and the networks made by these people make it easier to spread information about what is going on and how others can get involved.

The history of our communities is a part of what makes people feel like they belong, through the stories they share. These stories will continue to be told to future generations, with the people in our communities adding their own and continuing the tradition.

Buildings in our communities are a place for people to come together and get information. Across Cwm Taf, there have been successful instances of community groups taking over community buildings. We need to use this process in ways that best suit the community and support groups to become involved in managing buildings and other assets in this way.

The people involved in cultural activities in Cwm Taf have time, skills and connections which they are happy to share with their communities. There are more of these people out there and we need to make sure that they are able to get involved in a way that suits them.

Learning or speaking Welsh can have a positive effect on skills, jobs and networks and provide more opportunities to make connections. It is because of these things that we need to encourage more people to use the language in the future.

Our cultural assets

- Our many heritage buildings such as Cyfarthfa Castle and the Rhondda Heritage Museum attract tourism and host arts and performance events, as well as being sources of information about our historical and cultural past.
- In some areas groups have taken ownership of underused local buildings/environments and re-purposed them for community benefit (e.g. Friends of Parc Taf Bargoed and Welcome to our Woods in Treherbert).
- People told us about the strong community spirit in Cwm Taf – about connections with family and friends and social activities in their neighbourhoods. This is increased through the networks people belong to such as choirs and sports clubs which are largely supported by volunteers.
- There is a thriving music scene in Cwm Taf, with successful venues such as the Pop Factory in Porth and the Muni Arts Centre in Pontypridd and events like the Merthyr Rock festival and the Merthyr Rising festival in 2016.
- The annual Merthyr Tydfil Global Village Festival is about welcoming all languages, cultures and celebrating the different people that live in and around Merthyr Tydfil.
- The annual Parti Ponty festival in Rhondda Cynon Taf celebrates the Welsh language and Welsh culture.
- There are many small events and groups across Cwm Taf that bring people together to speak Welsh and to help grow the number of Welsh speakers.

Our cultural challenges

- We need to maintain and promote the use of our heritage and historical buildings and consider how we can diversify the use of other community buildings to benefit our communities.
- Taking part in creative activities is good for well-being. Some groups such as older people and those who are less well off face barriers in accessing these. Enabling inclusion in creative and community activities remains a challenge.
- We need to look at our approach to volunteering in Cwm Taf and use cultural activities to help people get involved and learn new skills.
- The internet and social media are powerful communication tools - and not just for our young people. We need to look at how we can use these more effectively to improve communication in and between communities.

- There is a national target to achieve one million Welsh speakers across Wales by 2050. This equates to 100,000 in Cwm Taf. Currently there are approximately 35,000 Welsh speakers in our area.
- We need to encourage the use of the Welsh language within our public service organisations in Cwm Taf and when engaging with other partners including communities.

You can read more about cultural well-being in the cultural well-being briefing document.

Economic well-being in Cwm Taf

When we talk about the economy, we are talking about everything that makes it possible for our communities to be successful. This includes the jobs and skills we have, how we make money and how we spend money. Economic well-being is an important part of overall well-being because it helps us to feel safe, comfortable and that we are in control of our lives.

Being in work is good for our health. Our well-being can also be affected by the built and natural surroundings we have, which is to do with how we plan and build our towns and communities.

If people and businesses do well, this can have a really positive effect on bringing more of the same into communities and giving communities something to share and be proud of.

Volunteering, learning new skills and putting time and money back into our communities to make a difference for others and for the future help us to feel good about ourselves. Volunteers are really important to community groups or businesses in Cwm Taf, while at the same time giving others the opportunity to get involved in their community and feeling as though they are a part of something.

Having a paying job is important to people's well-being in Cwm Taf. Earning money and being able to look after our families makes us happy and proud and gives us money to spend on other things that are important to us, such as leisure activities.

The employment rate in Cwm Taf is growing and long term unemployment is reducing. However, these figures remain worse than they do in other areas of Wales. To make further improvements, we need to make sure that people have the right skills to help them get a job, but also that they know how to find jobs. Unemployed people recognise that they need active support and guidance to help

them gain employment but also, that the organisations established to help them need to recognise where they create barriers and remove them.

Some people have jobs but do not earn enough money to support themselves and their families. 55% of people in poverty in Wales are in working households. Locally, people in work in Merthyr Tydfil are more likely to have lower paid work than people in Rhondda Cynon Taf. We need to make sure that it is more worthwhile for people to work than to not work and claim benefits.

The average distance employed people travel to work in Merthyr Tydfil (15.5km) and Rhondda Cynon Taf (16.3km) is shorter than the Wales average (16.7km). Despite this, the local landscape and geography of Cwm Taf mean it is often difficult to make connections and journeys locally. This can make it hard for people to easily get to a job, even if they have one.

Our public transport in Cwm Taf needs to be improved, but there are many other ways to get around, like walking or cycling, and we need to make sure that more people are encouraged to get around in this way. We also need to explore ways for people to get into the job market and different types of jobs that we might be able to have which may not have existed in the past, like online businesses or working online.

Councils have to write plans known as Local Development Plans, which set out how they plan to use land in Cwm Taf. These important decisions affect the well-being of our communities; getting this right will attract people and businesses into the area in the future. There is lots of work like this, which is about planning services across Cwm Taf; we need to make sure that the findings of the Well-being Assessment are taken into account across public services.

Where we live has a big influence on our well-being, with particular associations between housing and physical and mental health. In Cwm Taf a number of areas have been identified as having significant levels of housing deprivation (Merthyr Tydfil Town, Penydarren, Merthyr Vale, Gurnos, Mountain Ash West and Rhydyfelin Central). Using the LDP as an opportunity for targeted regeneration of deprived neighbourhoods could lead to improvements in physical and mental health and overall well-being.

The number of qualifications people have when they leave school and the number of people with a job are both going up in Cwm Taf and the number of people out of work for a long time is going down, but there is still improvement needed. There are projects which run across Cwm Taf to help people who are looking for work and we need to continue to use these. This will help to keep these figures going in the same positive way in the future.

Cwm Taf is part of the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal and the things being done as part of this project, relating to jobs and transport, should benefit people here, too. We need to make sure that the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal considers this Assessment and others in the region, which help us to understand the things that can make a difference to well-being beyond Cardiff. This includes the things that affect employment in the area like getting to work, or childcare while you are working.

Our economic assets

- Urban regeneration in Cwm Taf gives us the opportunity to create places that attract investment and business and improve well-being. Tylorstown is a current example of a regeneration area.
- We have unique leisure facilities in Cwm Taf, such as Bike Park Wales, which we need to make the most of.
- Volunteering plays an important role in the economy of Cwm Taf. The Community Voluntary Councils in Cwm Taf (Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil and Interlink RCT) support over 800 community and voluntary groups, whose volunteers are supporting activities in our communities.
- Cwm Taf local authorities are part of the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal and will be involved in opportunities to increase economic assets in our area.

Our economic challenges

- Homes are more affordable in Cwm Taf than in other areas of Wales, but may still be beyond the reach of young people and those on low incomes.
- Welfare reforms have badly affected Cwm Taf communities particularly Maerdy, Penywaun and Gurnos.
- Less prosperous areas of Wales including Cwm Taf have benefitted from investment of European funding. The withdrawal of this funding once Britain leaves the European Union will be a considerable loss.
- The geographical landscape of Cwm Taf makes transport difficult. This, together with transport costs is a barrier to accessing work.
- Children growing up in poorer families leave school with lower levels of educational qualifications, which reduces their prospects for employment.

You can read more about economic well-being in the economic well-being briefing document.

Environmental well-being in Cwm Taf

The environment can make us think of air, water, weather and 'green' or outdoor parts of our communities. Environmental well-being in Cwm Taf comes from much more than that, though, and includes the home we live in, the street we live on and the people around us.

In Cwm Taf, people love the beautiful landscapes and attractive 'green' spaces. Natural surroundings are important in making people feel proud, positive and happy. In many communities in Cwm Taf, people are interested in taking ownership of the outdoor spaces and making sure they stay attractive, clean and safe to play and spend time in.

Large areas of Cwm Taf are publicly owned and managed. Many of these areas, especially forests and woodlands, are located close to communities, which means opportunities for public service organisations, businesses and communities to work together to make the most of these spaces.

There are lots of groups and activities which help us to connect with our environment, through things like community gardening to make communities more attractive and help people learn new skills, or rambling and sport. Being able to use our surrounding outdoor spaces for some of these activities makes connections in communities and between communities stronger.

It is known that playing and spending time outside improves health. One in four children in Wales never plays outside. Children in Cwm Taf enjoy challenging, outdoor activities, but feel that there is a lack of this kind of activity for them to get involved in.

Not enough people use our outdoors to stay fit and healthy. The cost of this across Wales is estimated to be around £650 million. The levels of adult physical activity in Cwm Taf are among the lowest in Wales. We need to make sure that as many people as possible understand the health benefits of spending time outdoors and know how much being outside could improve their well-being. People also need to know where they can go and what they can do and know how the outdoors, nature and wildlife can have a positive impact on them.

Using footpaths or cycle paths to get around ('active' travel) helps to keep us fit. It also means that people are able to get to places they might otherwise not be able to get to, to take part in activities or work there. Using other ways to get around Cwm Taf that aren't a car or bus also help to keep pollution down, make people more active and help keep them healthy.

Clean and safe communities are something to be proud of and attract tourism to Cwm Taf, bringing with it money. The cost of making sure our natural

environment is attractive is low compared to the money that could come from businesses and visitors who are drawn to the beauty of Cwm Taf.

There are new laws which encourage public services to use land in particular ways and there is land to be used by communities across Cwm Taf. Land across Cwm Taf is owned by Welsh Government, both local authorities and Natural Resources Wales, which is an opportunity to think together how we best use this in future.

We need to make sure the people who plan land use consider communities and community well-being. Our well-being is about protecting the wonderful things we already have, so that future generations are able to enjoy them in the same ways.

A healthy natural environment will help us to manage the risks of flooding. Flooding is expected to increase in the future and can damage homes and businesses and cost money. We need to do all that we can to learn about climate change and make sure it does not negatively affect future generations.

Our environmental assets

- About a third of land in Cwm Taf is open to the public and the extent of our natural environment is one of our major assets.
- A healthy natural environment can attract economic investment through tourism.
- Our outdoor environment provides opportunities for physical activity. The Taff Trail is one of Wales' most popular active travel routes. Cwm Taf has over 800km of public pathways.
- Parkrun in Ynysyngharad Park, Pontypridd attracts runners and volunteers every weekend.
- An outdoor nursery has opened in Dare Valley Country Park which allows children to learn through experiences of the outdoors.
- A number of schemes exist to manage the landscape and protect wildlife habitats. Healthy Hillside is one example.
- A relatively high proportion of land in Cwm Taf is under public ownership/management (NRW, local authorities) which has the potential to provide opportunities for greater community involvement and use.

Our environmental challenges

- In Cwm Taf the risk of surface water flooding is high and expected to increase in the future.

- We have some of the highest proportion of socially disadvantaged communities located in flood risk areas.
- Although we have a wonderful natural environment, people told us that they were unaware of the paths and cycle ways in their areas. Better promotion and marketing is needed to encourage more people to use these assets for active travel and recreation.
- Children are spending less time outdoors, so they have fewer opportunities for physical activity and learning about and exploring the natural environment.
- Crime and anti-social behaviour (and the fear of it) is a significant barrier for people using and enjoying their local environment. Living in community spaces that are full of dog mess, litter, fly-tipping and drug paraphernalia were common issues that people expressed concern about.
- Cwm Taf's unique wildlife is increasingly fragmented and under threat.

You can read more about environmental well-being in the environmental briefing document.

Social well-being in Cwm Taf

Social well-being is about all the things that affect how we live our lives. It is about people, families and communities and it is about how we grow up, learn, work and age in Cwm Taf.

Having a good start in life is important to the well-being of future generations. This starts with looking after women's health before, during and after pregnancy and can be affected by the home and wider environment where our children grow up. 19% of women in Cwm Taf in 2013 experienced stress, anxiety, depression and other mental health problems during pregnancy.

Some children go through physical, emotional, or sexual abuse or live in families where there is parental separation, substance misuse, domestic violence, or mental illness. These are called Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and 47% of adults in Wales have experienced at least one ACE during childhood. These experiences cause long lasting health harms which continue into adulthood and older age. If we want to build strong, resilient children we can have the greatest impact if we focus on stopping these things from happening and protecting children and their families from the impact of ACEs during the first 1000 days of life (from conception to age two).

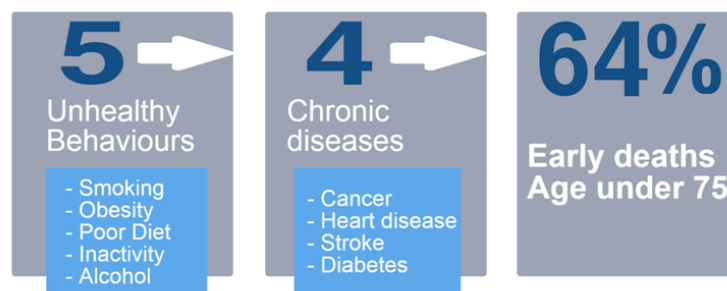
Evidence tells us that investing in programmes that support children’s well-being is good value, as early years programmes are often less expensive than the services needed to deal with the problems caused by poor child development.

If we want our adult population to be fit and healthy, it is important that this starts in childhood. 28% of children in Cwm Taf are overweight or obese by the time they start school. This leads to health problems later in life. Children in Cwm Taf eat less fruit and vegetables and are less physically active than children elsewhere in Wales.

Children’s chances in life are strongly influenced by their experience during their early years. Children from poorer families don’t do as well in education and this is noticeable in examination results. In the longer term this affects their future employment and income prospects.

Health is an important part of well-being and poor health affects our ability to learn, work and socialise. In Cwm Taf, the impact of unhealthy behaviours on illnesses and early deaths in Cwm Taf is starkly demonstrated below:

Figure 5: Lifestyle, health and well-being in Cwm Taf



Rates of smoking and obesity are higher in Cwm Taf than the Wales average. Alcohol consumption and other substance misuse are associated with many chronic health problems including mental ill health, as well as social problems such as crime, assault and domestic violence.

People in Cwm Taf are living longer, and living longer in good health, which is good news. However, people living in the most deprived parts of Cwm Taf live shorter lives. For men, this is 7.4 years shorter and for women, 3.7 years shorter than those living in our least deprived areas.

Healthy life expectancy is an estimate of how long people can be expected to live in 'good' or 'fairly good' health. The healthy life expectancy gap in Cwm Taf between our least and most deprived areas is 15 years for men and women.

We need to make sure that the people getting older continue to have good well-being. Our population aged 65 years and over is set to increase over the next

twenty years, with the largest increase predicted to be in those aged 85 years and over. This will lead to an increase in age-related chronic illnesses and will have a significant impact on people, carers and health and social care services.

Older people in Cwm Taf value their independence and being able to live in their own home. They expect to be treated with dignity and respect, have easy access to good quality information and advice and have accessible transport. Future plans will have to look at the housing needs of this age group, as a range of more adaptable and specialised housing will be needed. A third of our population aged over 65 live alone and some have concerns about being isolated and lonely. In the future, communities will need to be more 'age-friendly'. This can be done by creating homes and neighbourhoods that help older people to remain active and involved with their friends, neighbours, family and local community.

As our older population increases, so will the amount of dementia in Cwm Taf. In 2015, there were approximately 3,685 over 65s affected by dementia in Cwm Taf. It is estimated that this will rise to 5,455 by 2030.

Our homes and the places we live affect our well-being. Housing hazards such as damp and mould increase the risk of allergies and asthma. Older people are particularly at risk of accidents due to poor lighting or lack of stair handrails. They are also more likely to suffer ill-health in a cold home, which can be linked to fuel poverty. We have old housing stock, coupled with people moving away from some areas of Cwm Taf where traditional industries have ended.

Feeling safe is important to people's quality of life. However, people have told us that crime and anti-social behaviour is a barrier for people using and enjoying their local environment.

There are many social assets within Cwm Taf communities which can help improve well-being. These include capacity, skills, knowledge, connections and potential of communities.

Good mental health is important for well-being. Cwm Taf has the highest levels of mental illness and poor well-being in Wales. People feel that everyone should be made more aware of the positive things that are happening through the many voluntary sector groups in Cwm Taf and value the beautiful outdoor environment.

Our social assets

- Life expectancy and healthy life expectancy in Cwm Taf are improving and people are living longer in good health.
- The gap in outcomes between the most and least deprived people in Cwm Taf is narrowing, but there is work still to be done.

- Community cohesion describes the ability of communities to function and grow in harmony and where people are confident that they belong. People in Cwm Taf have called this community spirit and feel that this is particularly strong in our area.
- Because social well-being is about all the things that affect our lives, it does not stand alone – cultural, economic and environmental assets all contribute to social well-being.
- Our statutory and voluntary services support the health and well-being of our communities.

Our social challenges

- We must develop collective action to prevent/ minimise harm caused by Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) in Cwm Taf if we are to improve the prospects of our future generations.
- We must consider the use of cost effective preventative approaches, particularly in the early years, and in relation to the prevention of health harming behaviours in Cwm Taf.
- The increase in our older population in the coming years in Cwm Taf will present considerable health and social care challenges.
- Building confidence and resilience is important in improving well-being in Cwm Taf. Improving economic circumstances is a particular challenge.
- Addressing the quality, safety and suitability of our housing and built environment is key to meeting the present and future needs of our communities in Cwm Taf.

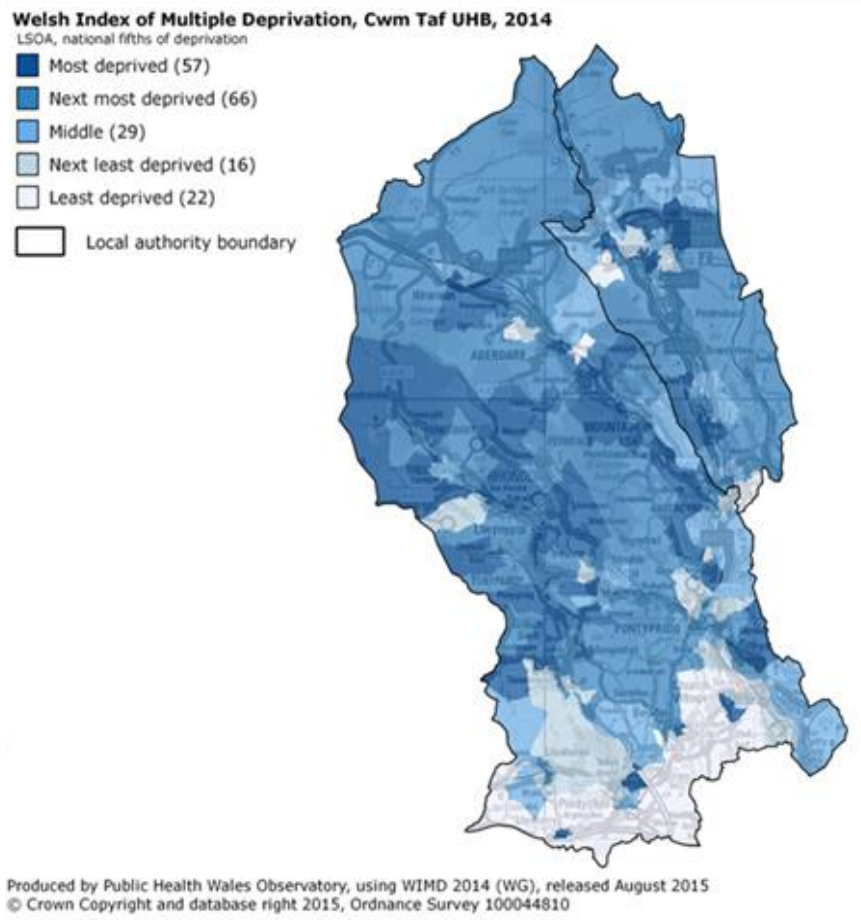
You can read more about social well-being in the social well-being briefing document.

DEPRIVATION AND INEQUALITIES

Well-being is dependent on a wide range of factors including lifestyle, education, employment, income, housing and our environment. In Cwm Taf, a third of our population live in the most deprived areas of Wales.

This leads to inequalities across all four well-being themes covered in this Assessment and results in poor health, social, educational and economic outcomes across the life course for our children, adults and older people.

Figure 6: Deprivation Map of Cwm Taf



Austerity measures and welfare reforms have had a greater negative impact here than in other areas and these risk increasing inequalities further. It has been suggested² that the following evidence based actions could improve outcomes and reduce inequalities:

- Programmes that ensure adequate incomes, reduce debt and reduce income inequalities;
- Programmes that reduce unemployment in vulnerable groups or areas and that promote physical and mental health in the workplace;
- Programmes that improve physical environments, such as traffic calming schemes and the creation of green space;

² NHS Health Scotland. (2016). *Economics of prevention, inequality*. Briefing 3. Edinburgh: NHS Health Scotland

- Programmes that target vulnerable groups by investing in more intensive services and other forms of support for such groups, in the context of universal provision;
- Early years programmes;
- Policies that use regulation and price (for example, minimum unit pricing or taxes) to reduce risky behaviours.

This is not an exhaustive list, but demonstrates how reducing inequalities and improving well-being is dependent on integrated actions across all the themes of the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

MEASURING OUR ASSETS AND UNDERSTANDING THE GAPS

We can see from the evidence presented in this Well-being Assessment that we have many assets in Cwm Taf; land, buildings, activities and even people. The Public Services Board needs to consider the assets we have as an important addition to the ways in which we design and deliver services in the future. Using the assets of our communities will close the gap between public services and the people of Cwm Taf working together.

As we look towards adopting an assets based approach we must consider how we are going to meaningfully measure these to reflect the strengths and positive activity going on in our communities. Assets include the capacity, skills, knowledge, connections and potential in a community. Measuring assets alongside needs gives an improved understanding of communities and helps to build resilience and social capital³.

In this report we have looked at well-being according to four separate themes; cultural, economic, environmental and social, but many of the challenges faced by the Cwm Taf population are things that cut across more than one theme.

Our engagement workshops identified a number of interconnections between cultural, economic, environmental and social well-being. These are the more complicated issues which we need to look at *across* services and organisations, to make best use of resources and improve well-being for our population.

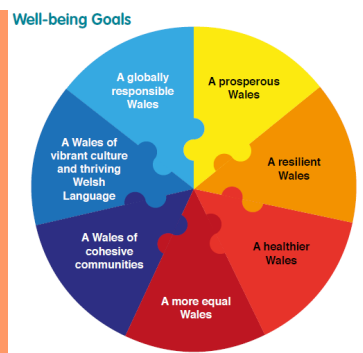
One example of this is housing:

³ The networks of relationships among people who live and work in a particular society, enabling that society to function effectively.

Housing			
Cultural	Economic	Environmental	Social
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People need to feel part of their community and many want to offer their time, skills and connections • Community amenities maintain/develop community cohesion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local development plans set out the land-use planning policies for different types of development • Affordability of housing is difficult for some groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People want to live in a clean, safe environment and increasingly want to help manage their local areas • A healthy natural environment can be a cost-effective way of regenerating neighbourhoods, and builds greater community resilience to a changing climate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality of the home has a substantial impact on health • As our population aged over 65 increases over the coming years, consideration needs to be given to the range of housing needs of this group • Community safety issues affect well-being.

As we move into the planning stage of this work, we will need to consider other issues, like housing, which cut across more than one well-being theme and which can be addressed most effectively through a collaborative approach, by multiple services and organisations. It is these issues that the Public Services Board will priorities in the Well-being Plan.

NEXT STEPS



In considering these questions and developing the Well-being Plan, the Public Services Board will consider how our organisations can collectively maximise Cwm Taf’s contribution to the national well-being goals.

By using this Assessment and exploring the answers to the questions we have set, we will begin to embrace different ways of working and improve well-being in Cwm Taf now and for future generations.

The findings of this Well-being Assessment will help the Public Services Board to identify some next steps which can be taken to help improve well-being in Cwm Taf. Some of these steps can be taken immediately (short term); some will need more preparation and will take more time to put in place (medium term); and others have to do with the ways we work together and will take longer to develop (long term).

What are our next steps in the short term?

The Cwm Taf Well-being Assessment is a live document, in that, as our understanding of well-being continues to improve, so this document can be updated to reflect what we know and how it can inform the design and delivery of future services.

Much of the data we have available and have used to complete this Assessment is at a Cwm Taf or local authority area level. As the Public Services Board progresses the planning stage of this work, we will need to consider ways in which we will understand the findings of this Assessment in relation to local communities. The Cwm Taf Public Services Board is already doing some important work around the ideas in this Assessment and looking at ways in which we can work together with communities to improve well-being in the future.

This Assessment does not give us everything we need to know and our understanding of well-being needs to be updated regularly. What it does give us is a current picture of well-being in Cwm Taf and some ideas of what to do next.

We can use these questions as a starting point for further conversation with communities, as we develop our response to this Well-being Assessment and plan future services.

- We need to make sure that both strategic and local decision makers understand the links across all the themes of cultural, environmental, economic and social well-being in Cwm Taf
- How can public services and communities work better together in the future? What is standing in our way? How can public services remove some of the things that stop communities from being able to easily take ownership of their lives, areas and well-being?
- How can public services help people and networks to connect better to each other? How can we do this differently to the ways we have tried before? Who can help us?
- In what ways would communities like to volunteer or be involved with public services and with the things going on in their area? What is standing in their way?

- How can we make it easier for communities to identify the buildings and open spaces in their areas and have a say in how they should be used?
- How can we include businesses and other parts of the community in our work, and better understand how they can contribute to improving well-being?
- How can we get communities sharing their positive stories with the rest of the world and attract visitors to Cwm Taf? How can we promote what we are doing and how well we are doing it? Do we use tools like social media to their full advantage?
- Are we collecting the right evidence, which really tells us whether or not the things we are doing work? What is stopping us from sharing the information we collect more freely? What information should we be collecting and sharing? What are people interested in knowing?

What are our next steps in the medium term?

The next stage of this work is to write a Well-being Plan (by April 2018), which will contain specific well-being objectives and details of how public services plan to meet these objectives, *together*, and improve well-being in Cwm Taf.

The Cwm Taf Public Services Board has received detailed feedback and recommendations for progressing this work from a host of stakeholders. Recommendations include links that might be made, potential gaps that need addressing and highlighting of what we are already doing well and should continue to develop. We already have a great deal of information with which to begin to write a Well-being Plan and we need to ensure that we fully understand and organise this early on in the process.

It is important that objectives provide real opportunities for public services and communities in Cwm Taf to work together to improve well-being. *Each* objective should do this, as well as all of the objectives together. As we know, well-being means different things to different people and the objectives should be about how we can make it easier for everyone to have control over their own well-being. Individual organisations' well-being objectives will need to take the findings of this Assessment into consideration and make the links between the objectives of the Public Services Board and individual organisational strategies and planning.

The partners on the Public Services Board also need to set their own well-being objectives as individual organisations. It will be extremely important that the well-being objectives of the Public Services Board, while about how we can improve well-being through partnership working, take these into account.

There is a greater understanding to be gathered around future trends and how the things that affect well-being in Cwm Taf now (and how we deal with them) will impact on the well-being of future generations. The Public Services Board will work with colleagues across Wales to develop this understanding, as well as exploring what future trends mean at a local level.

What are our next steps in the long term?

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act sets out a different way of working to the traditional ways in which some public services may have worked in the past. The Cwm Taf Public Services Board has been established to address the issues which require a partnership working approach to make the greatest difference. This will involve all public services, including communities, in improving well-being together.

The only way we can do this is to keep this conversation going, by talking to the people who know what will make a difference to well-being in Cwm Taf; the people who live and work here.