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GWASANAETHAU
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CWMTAF

PUBLIC
SERVICES
BOARD



ANNUAL REPORT

2018-19



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Reflecting on the year..

We published our Well-being Plan in May 2018. In the year since then, we have started to deliver on the immediate steps for our Well-being Objectives, the things you said would make a positive difference to your lives; having thriving communities, healthy people, a strong economy and a Cwm Taf where no one felt lonely or isolated.

In this first year, Cwm Taf Public Services Board has put structures and processes in place to deliver improvements and made progress in some areas and seen improvements in how we work together to collectively make a difference, not just now but in the future.

In delivering on our Plan, we want to build on the learnings from the Well-being Assessment. This took an assets-based approach, meaning that we looked at what works well in Cwm Taf, what people are proud of and what we can do to strengthen and further develop these. We also have a strong preventative agenda. We are working collaboratively to stop problems from occurring and to prevent situations from becoming worse. A lot of this work is focussing on tackling Adverse Childhood Experiences, or ACEs. This has been identified as a critical area of work for Cwm Taf, and the PSB is in a unique position to use its collective power to bring about a system-wide change for our communities struggling with these wicked issues.

The Act challenges us to think and work differently. We want to be brave and push for real innovation, and make sure everything we do has the communities of Cwm Taf at the centre. This Annual Report is the opportunity for us to celebrate our achievements but also challenge ourselves on how much of a difference we are making.

Professor Marcus Longley

Chair of the Public Services Board



Our Wellbeing Objectives:

Thriving Communities

We said we would...

“Promote safe, confident, strong and thriving communities improving the well-being of residents and visitors and building on our community assets.”



To achieve this, we have:

Established a structure of ‘delivery groups’ in each of our Community Zones: Gurnos and Upper Rhondda Fach

- The membership of these groups brings together PSB partners, anchor organisations such as Fern Partnership and Merthyr Valleys Homes, and community leaders.
- This collaboration helps us to better understand what services are successful and identify gaps in support for our communities and families.
- A key focus is on preventing and mitigating the effects of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) that place stress on the body and mind, and impacts on how we grow and develop. We believe that in tackling ACEs we can help to break the negative cycle of generational difficulties that exists in our communities.

Started to develop a neighbourhood network in each area, supported by two ‘community co-ordinators’ funded through Welsh Government seed funding

- Ceri Samuel, in Gurnos and Louise Clement, in Upper Rhondda Fach work in and with the local area and its residents, helping to build and strengthen existing networks and improve access to services. This means that, through these roles, we listen to local voices and involve people in how we move forwards.

Held 13 community involvement events

- Conversations at the events with local groups, residents and partners shaped how the Zones have developed, and identified ‘spokes’ - other key buildings or facilities that the community value that we will try and link with.
- These conversations also informed how money invested through the partnership for greening projects was used in each area.

Launched two Community Hub buildings

- Ferndale Infants School has been brought back in to use – ‘Hwb Glynrhedynog’ - and the 3Gs building has been refurbished, including undertaking a public vote and renaming it ‘Calon Las’.
- These act as spaces for community use and accessing information, advice and assistance, and offer services such as childcare provision and employment courses.



Worked with Data Cymru to create an evaluation framework

- This will allow us to look at whether we are making a real difference in Gurnos and Upper Rhondda Fach – and look at some longer term goals with our communities.

Our Wellbeing Objectives:

Healthy People

We said we would...

“Help people live long and happy lives and overcome any challenges.”



To achieve this, we have:

Focused on our youngest citizens and making sure that they have the best start to life

- We collaborated with partners to gather evidence of risk and protective factors and reviewed existing provision and pathways from conception to age 7 years old, including health, education, play and parenting.
- This has helped us to better understand what services are working well but also the gaps and what we need to do to improve.
- This is aimed at preventing children from suffering Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and building resilience in those facing them.

Committed to develop a preventative ‘vulnerability profile’ in Cwm Taf so that we can identify and help vulnerable families before they reach crisis point

- Building resilience and working with vulnerable families at the earliest stages will help to work through problems before they get too big.
- This work will help us to provide a better and more joined up service across the public sector, making it easier for people to get the range of help they need.

Started removing added sugar drinks from all PSB partner locations in Cwm Taf.

- This includes all our offices, cafes and canteens, leisure centres and vending machines.
- It is part of a long term plan to tackle obesity and poor dental health. In Cwm Taf:
 - 29% of adults are obese and almost 2 out of 3 are overweight (64%)
 - 14.4% of 4 to 5 year olds are obese – this is the highest percentage in Wales.
 - Almost half of children have tooth decay by age five.
- Diet fizzy drinks, fruit juices and sugar free alternatives will still be available.

Began to roll out the One Small Change Campaign in January 2019.

- This campaign encourages people who work for public services in Cwm Taf, to make ‘one healthy behaviour change’ of their own choice, and keep it up for 30 days, then share their experience on social media through #FeelGreat.
- We integrated with existing well-being initiatives across the partnership. The public sector employs a significant number of people from within Cwm Taf so a workforce change could make a huge difference to our collective well-being.



Our Wellbeing Objectives:

Strong Economy

We said we would...

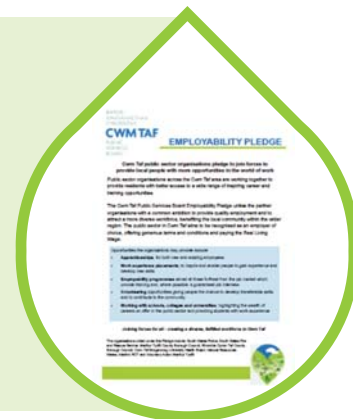
“Stimulate and boost the aspirations and skills of our people to meet public and private sector career opportunities”.



To achieve this, we have:

Collaborated with partners from across the PSB to develop an ‘Employability Pledge’

- We know that, together, we can make a huge difference to how people can access employment and training opportunities in Cwm Taf
- The Pledge represents a collective commitment from public sector bodies around offering opportunities linked to employment, work experience and apprenticeships.
- There are core parts of the Pledge to which everyone will be able to commit straight away, and others that may involve only a few members or act as something for us to work towards.
- This will be adopted and rolled out in the second year.



Started to work with schools to find out what interests our young people, where there are gaps in opportunities, and try to find out where there may be future skills shortages

- We need to get better at how we work with schools and colleges, but we have made steps towards this, starting with the secondary schools linked to our ‘Community Zones’.

Taken learning from the Well-being Assessment; we know that people are very proud of their local area and we want to show it off! Tourism is a growth area for our local economy we need to think about how we can build in this, creating more jobs and opportunities.

- Making the most of our natural environment is critical to tourism in Cwm Taf and we need to work to ensure we build resilience to enjoy it now and for years to come. Greater resilience across our natural environment both supports well-being and provides economic opportunities.
- To better understand and sustainably develop the sector, we carried out the first survey of tourism businesses across the whole of Cwm Taf. This gave us an insight into the strengths of organisations, as well as training and skills needs and areas that could be developed. We received feedback from 87 providers and will look to improve on that next time.
- The learnings from this review will be used to inform our second year work, linked to working with schools to promote careers and opportunities in tourism.

Our Wellbeing Objectives:

Tackling Loneliness and Isolation

We said we would...

“We will work in new ways to channel the undoubted strengths of our communities, including volunteering to tackle more effectively the loneliness and isolation which often exists within many of them”.

To achieve this, we have:

To understand what it means to be lonely or isolated we reviewed what services are available in Cwm Taf and asked what challenges they faced.

We've worked with the Cwm Taf Regional Partnership Board (RPB) to look at what are the critical success factors that might work locally and what might have the biggest impact:

- Having a shared understanding of what social prescribing is, and how we can work together to take this forward so that we are supporting people in a more holistic way, and encouraging them to make positive changes in their own life.
- Supporting befriending services in a more sustainable way so that services people need and use are not at risk.
- Developing community support and assets, working with communities to become better connected and resilient. We are looking to try 'place based' approaches with some communities so that residents can access the right support at the right time.
 - This includes building on and learning from good practice that already exists, such as Welcome to Our Woods and Safer Merthyr Tydfil's 'Reconnect 50+' project, winner of the this year's Crystal Trophy award, so that public bodies work better to support community groups.

Looked at how volunteering can make a difference.

- We've started to develop a model for improving volunteering opportunities for our young people, linked to the Welsh Baccalaureate and Duke of Edinburgh Award.
- We worked with schools and local groups to hold volunteering fairs in Treorchy Comprehensive and Merthyr College.



As a cross cutting theme, we work to check that all our Well-being Objectives are considering how they are working to address social isolation and loneliness.

Our First Year:

We've been building a strong platform to springboard future action, working to create an environment of constructive challenge building relationships within and between organisations.

This has included establishing a dedicated PSB support team, showing a commitment from partners and dedication to working in a new way. This first year has been as much about how we're working differently, as set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, as what we're starting to deliver.

The real value of the PSB lies as much in the indirect role partners play in delivering the aspirations of the Act by bringing communities and existing neighbourhood connectors together and supporting and building on the good work that is happening in our communities as it does in the direct role we play in delivering wellbeing objectives.

How we are using the 'Five Ways of Working'



1

LONG TERM we are...

- starting to develop a vulnerability profile to identify those who may have short term needs, and helping to build resilience for the future
- developing an information sharing protocol so that services will offer a more joined up system and people to get the help they need when they need it.



2

PREVENTION we are...

- adopting a 'no added sugar' drinks policy across our buildings to address the high levels of obesity and tooth decay in Cwm Taf. After the summer 2019 only water, fruit juices, diet fizzy drinks and sugar free alternatives will be available.
- promoting healthy behaviours amongst our workforce and beyond



3

INTEGRATION we are...

- challenging at how we work as individuals and as a collective
- exploring how we can make the most of opportunities and investments such as 'City Deal' and the Valleys Regional Park



4

COLLABORATION we are...

- working on the next stages of the 'Employability Pledge' as a shared approach to apprenticeships, routes into employment and training as well as exploring employer sponsored volunteering schemes.
- looking at how we work with other Boards in the area, particularly the Regional Partnership Board



5

INVOLVEMENT we are...

- getting better at ensuring everyone plays their part in shaping and designing how we work together, particularly in the two Community Zones
- trying to put the service user at the heart of design and provision of services in Cwm Taf

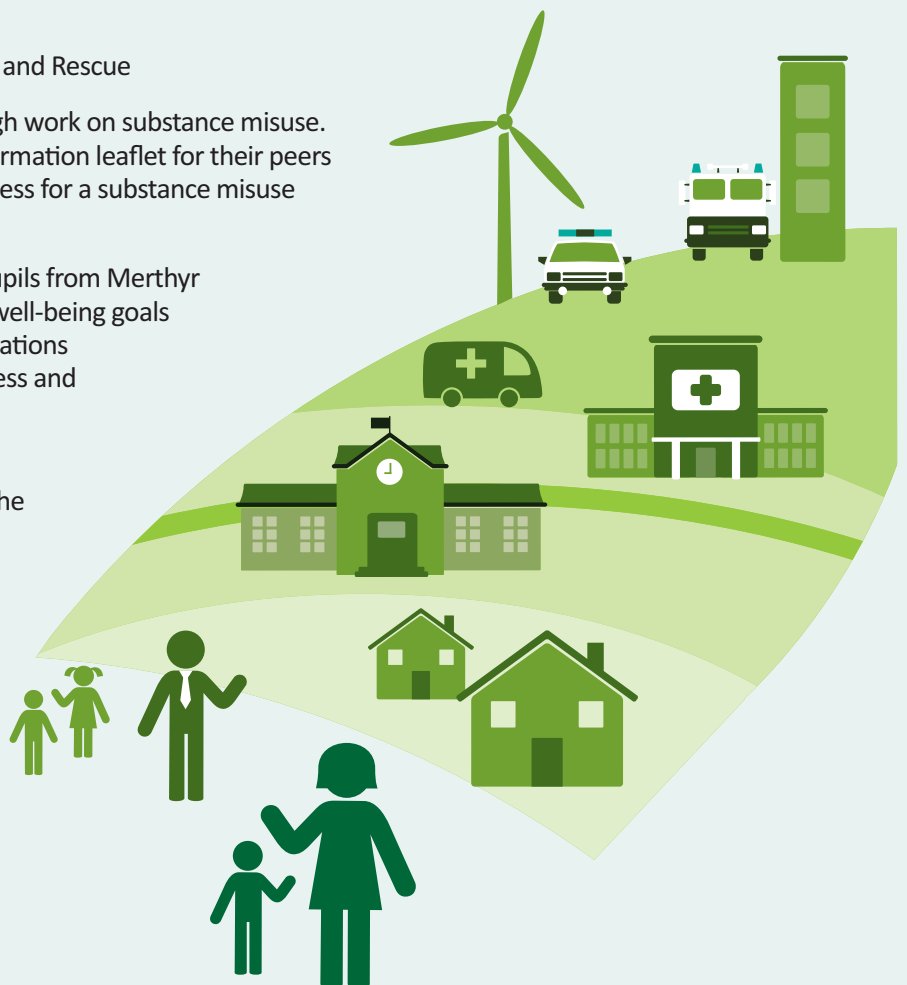


Pupils at spring conferences

Underpinning all of this work is developing an evaluation framework that we can use to measure the difference we are making, the approaches we are taking and challenge ourselves about being ambitious enough for our communities. We will work to challenge ourselves more around the difference we are making and the outcomes we want to see.

As partners we have our own programmes of work which deliver wellbeing objectives, but through the PSB they come together and reflect a single public service for our communities. Some of the ways in which the public services and our communities have come together in our first year are:

- Greening projects in the Community Zones that have worked to bring the community together and improve the natural environment
- Starting to develop an integrated model for early years' provision as part of Cwm Taf being a pioneer 'Children First' area. In October 2018, the Gurnos received a ministerial visit from Huw Irranca-Davies to see the work
- 'Safe and Well' visits by South Wales Fire and Rescue
- Developing Young Commissioners through work on substance misuse. This saw young people producing an information leaflet for their peers and involving them in the tendering process for a substance misuse service for the area
- Held two spring conferences involving pupils from Merthyr and RCT schools, exploring the national well-being goals in 2018 with Sophie Howe, Future Generations Commissioner, and the theme of loneliness and social isolation in 2019.
- Worked with a group of young people to produce their own animated version of the Cwm Taf Well-being Plan
- Looked at ways of relieving feelings of loneliness and social isolation. Volunteering is a fantastic way of meeting new people and learning new skills. 'Welcome Friends' provided a case study for the January PSB newsletter and details how Daphne, Carl and Josie have benefitted from volunteers giving some of their time.



Moving forward

We have a clear vision and partners committed to collectively moving forward on our Plan. That said, we are still learning; we are a new board dealing with a new Act and new ways of working.

This isn't easy and we are learning lessons along the way. We are working to improve how we work with our citizens and want to have an ongoing conversation, but we know we need to get better at this, and improve the range of people that we involve in the work.

The Well-being Plan set out our aims focussing on improving wellbeing in Cwm Taf. We need to make sure that what we try to deliver makes a real difference to our residents, and takes into account changing trends and uncertainties, such as Brexit, the health board boundary of Cwm Taf changing to include Bridgend and our response to the climate change emergency. The steps we are taking are those that we believe will make the greatest long term differences.

Crucially, the PSB is only one body that is working to improve well-being in Cwm Taf. The individual partners are also working in their own right in the areas that they are responsible for, and there is a wide range of grass roots and community organisations the length and breadth of Cwm Taf doing fantastic work, based entirely on meeting local needs. What we are interested in doing is exploring how we can support this work, work with these groups and remove barriers to build community capacity in this way.

In the coming year we will continue to deliver on our Plan, use our evidence base and work hard to keep improving how we involve people. We will build on the assets identified in the Assessment – such as our unique landscape and strong sense of community – and the solid foundations laid in our first year of working. We are confident that the second year will see us 'switch' from being process driven to being brave, exploring new and different ways to improve well-being and using the ways of working to create thriving communities of healthy people, enjoying a strong economy.

For more information about how you can get involved and have your say on the PSB, please visit

www.ourcwmtaf.wales

