



3rd December 2020

Dear Colleague,

Velindre University NHS Trust: Written Evidence to the Public Accounts Committee on its review of the Barriers to the successful Implementation of the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

1. Overview of the Trust

1.1 Velindre University NHS Trust (the Trust) provides a range of service across Wales including Blood and Transplantation services and non-surgical tertiary oncology services. It also hosts a number of NHS bodies including Health Technology Wales, NWIS and NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership (NWSP).

2. Awareness and Understanding of the Well-Being of Future Generations Act (the Act) and its implications

2.1 The Trust welcomes the Act and sees it as a pivotal piece of legislation that will support Wales in embracing the sustainability challenge. The Act operates at a variety of levels and its understanding varies at each level.

2.2 **Velindre University NHS Trust Board level:** a thorough understanding of the Act and its implications. This has been supported by regular meetings with the Future Generations Commissioner and support and information from the Commissioner's Office.

2.3 **Service level within the Trust:** a good understanding of the Act and the application of the useful set of policy guidance and tools regarding service design and delivery e.g. the 'Journey To a Well-Being Goal' which has made it easier to highlight operational changes, by providing tangible examples of the application of the Act; also pointing to good practice in other organisations and settings.

2.4 **Patients/donors/citizens:** our experience suggests there is a reasonable knowledge of general aim of the Act and what organisations should be doing with patients/donors/citizens to translate it into practice. This appears to be growing although we have no quantitative evidence available to support this currently.

2.5 **Staff:** a good and developing understanding of the Act and how to use it on a daily/tangible basis to make a difference from collaboration with partners to reducing

carbon emissions. This is assisted through the provision of tools/information from the Commissioner's Office and the Environmental Officer working across the Trust

3. Resources to Implement the Act

3.1 There has been investment across Wales to implement the Act. The Commissioners Office is an excellent facilitator/resource which can be called on to support understanding and action. Similarly, the wide range of information, education and digital resources are extremely useful.

3.2 Within the Trust, there is an Independent Member who is the Sustainability Champion, with the Director of Strategic Transformation, Planning and Digital having Board responsibility. The Trust utilises its allocated funding to invest in priorities/activities that will ensure it complies with the Act. More importantly, the Trust is ambitious and wishes to become an exemplar.

3.3 Additional resources at a number of levels would assist in accelerating the understanding of the Act amongst the Welsh public (e.g. schools curriculum; education); and its implementation. Within the Trust, additional resources would be welcomed in a number of areas:

- Availability of more tools/support from the Commissioner's Office/other bodies
- Further appointments to support the Director of Strategic Transformation, Planning and Digital and the Environmental Officer in providing additional support/knowledge/practical assistance throughout the Trust and help staff try things out.
- A small number of post across the Trust as practical change makers, supporting staff to engage with patients, donors and partners to identify and implement changes which make a difference
- Practical support form relationship managers potentially working across organisations at a regional level to provide additional capacity to support strategic developments

4. Support from Future Generations Commissioners Office

4.1 The Trust has received positive support from the Future Generations Commissioner office in the past year. This has included meeting with the Trust Board to discuss strategic developments; attendance at the sustainability themed Annual Staff Awards; discussions with the senior leadership team responsible for the Transforming Cancer Services

Programme regarding the framing of it within the Act; and various interactions with the office on practical guidance etc.

4.2 Given the breadth of the agenda, it would be beneficial if additional support was available from the Future Generations Commissioner Office and/or other agencies. For example:

- a person(s) assigned to work with an organisation(s) providing practical advice on strategic / operational developments;
- additional capacity provided to advise on ideas/opportunities and support the Trust / organisations in making the connections etc
- additional digital materials (training; tools; practical resources etc)

Leadership Role of the Welsh Government

4.3 The Act is a pioneering piece of legislation which sets progressive and ambitious goals. The Welsh Government have, and continue to take a leading role in championing its implementation through further policy, guidance and business processes. They are also progressing a range of complimentary legislation to really deliver a policy agenda which address a number of national issues such as equity; poverty; social inclusion e.g. through the introduction of the Socio-Economic Duty.

4.4 There are a number of areas where further Welsh Government leadership would enhance the ability to implement the Act. These include:

- Developing shared outcomes across organisations to enhance collaboration and ensure that Act is central in the design and delivery of services;
- Streamlining the number of requirements/targets to provide greater clarity, priority and precision and allowing organisations flexibility to explore innovative solutions in implementing services and the Act.
- Reducing potential duplication e.g. the Public Service Boards and Regional Partnership Boards cover two slightly different scopes. It might be advantageous to reduce the number of Boards etc and ensure the Act is central to everything
- Ensuring alignment within Government departments e.g. the opportunity to better align investment decisions, for example, Welsh Government Capital Business Cases, with the seven well-being goals and the five ways of working outlined within the Act. The All-Wales capital funding should be prioritised for investments which support the delivery of the Act and which improve the overall health and well-being of the population. Also ensuring the Act is valued and the investment decisions are not too skewed by financial considerations as they are easier to quantify.

- Lead the way in simple areas by becoming an exemplar itself

5. Barriers to Successful Implementation

5.1 There are a number of areas which could reduce/slow down implementation of the Act. These include:

- Capacity and capability within organisations which are extremely busy and often stretched.
- Too many other initiatives which get in the way / blur lines.
- Focus on today e.g. immediate pressures/targets which may distract from long-term / strategic views and decisions.
- Unknowns e.g. COVID/Brexit
- Incorrect use of key policy drivers e.g. incentives / dis-incentives on investment etc
- Cultural change will be difficult without more quick wins; incentives and correct policy drivers.
- Funding: whilst much of the Act is not related to funding/investment, future strategic capital investment will be required to effect a number of changes required in the future built environment.

6. Ensuring Successful Implementation in the Future

6.1 The Trust believes that good progress is being made in implementing the Act its acceleration, and the transition from legislation into normalised culture 'the way we do things around here' will be assisted by the potential developments identified previously in this paper.

6.2 A strong, clear and progressive Welsh Government policy agenda which encourages and rewards sustainable behaviours by organisations which doesn't focus simply on output targets, but outcomes and delivering broader social value, will be vital. This needs to be supported by bold, dynamic leadership where organisations are prepared to take risks in innovating. Finally, this requires space from policy-makers, Government and regulators to 'do the right thing' and 'not the easy thing' if we are to achieve the future envisaged by the Act.