

HEFCW well-being statement

Revised March 2018



Noddir gan
Lywodraeth Cymru
Sponsored by
Welsh Government

Introduction

The Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) is a Welsh Government Sponsored Body that was established primarily to fund, advise on, and regulate the higher education (HE) sector in Wales. The Higher Education Act (Wales) 2015 refocused the role of the organisation to reflect changes in funding and to strengthen the role of HE in supporting social inclusion.

We regulate fee levels at universities, ensure a framework is in place for assessing the quality of higher education (HE), and scrutinise the performance of universities. We use resources from the Welsh Government and others to secure HE learning and research of the highest quality, make the most of the contribution of HE to Wales's culture, society and economy and ensure high quality, accredited teacher training.

We published our first well-being statement in 2017. In 2018, the statement and objectives were reviewed by our Policy Forum (February 2018) which concluded that the well-being objectives continued to be relevant and did not need updating as they were aligned with our new Corporate Strategy 2017-20.

The requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015

Public bodies identified within the Act are required to develop well-being objectives, and a supporting statement of well-being by no later than the 31 March 2017. The well-being objectives must seek to maximise the organisation's contribution to the delivery of the seven well-being goals, (Figure1) and be developed in a manner consistent with the sustainable development principle¹. The well-being statement must demonstrate:

- Why the public body considers that its well-being objectives will contribute to the achievement of the well-being goals.
- Why the public body considers that its well-being objectives have been set in accordance with the sustainable development principle, including an explanation around involvement of people interested in achieving the well-being goals.
- The steps to be taken to meet the well-being objectives in accordance with the sustainable development principle.
- How each public body will govern itself to meet its well-being goals.
- How each body will keep the steps it takes to achieve the well-being objectives under review.
- When the body expects to meet its well-being objectives.
- Any other relevant information about the well-being objectives.

¹ www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2015/2/section/5/enacted

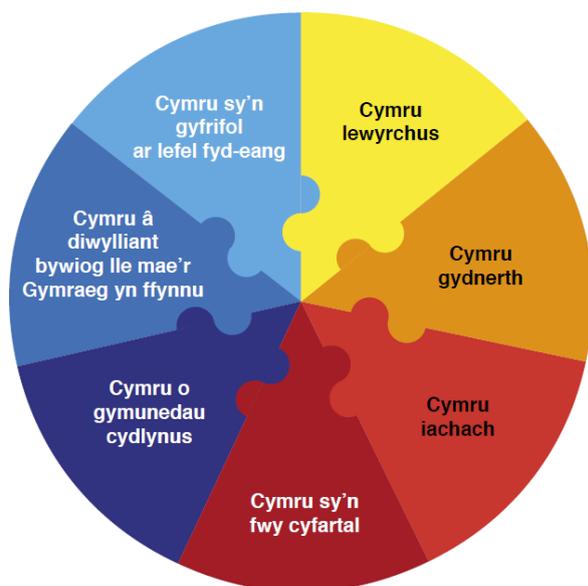


Figure 1

Developing our well-being objectives to support the well-being goals

In 2016 we were asked to develop a new Higher Education Strategy for Wales (HE Strategy) on behalf of the Welsh Government. The Welsh Government has long recognised the importance of higher education and its contribution to the twin pillars of social justice and economic success, not least within the Policy Statement on Higher Education². In developing a new draft HE strategy we sought to ensure that this was developed in a manner consistent with the requirements of The Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015, and in particular the requirements of the sustainable development principle. This included identifying 24 clearly articulated requirements which would inform the development of our well-being objectives.

A detailed report on the development of the HE strategy with a ten-year time horizon was prepared which lists both the extensive consultation process, and the involvement of a wide range of stakeholders in the production of the strategy. The responses generated were wide-ranging and included not only universities and associated organisations, but a diverse range of bodies including faith groups, student organisations, equalities, and Welsh language. The strategy development culminated in a consultation event with over 100 attendees.

This approach was complemented by an analysis of current HE provision and an identification by the stakeholders of the changes required to meet both the future needs of Wales and to contribute fully to the delivery of the well-being goals. This work also informed the development of our Corporate Strategy 2017-20 which was published in December 2017.

²www.hefcw.ac.uk/documents/publications/corporate_documents/Policy%20statement%20on%20highere%20education%20Cymraeg.pdf

Our well-being objectives are also consistent with the vision that underpins the Corporate Strategy 2017-20 “Sustainable, accessible, internationally *excellent higher education in Wales*”. We have mapped our well-being objectives against the seven well-being goals in the table below:

Ensure that higher education in Wales is relevant and accessible to all who could benefit from it, or contribute to it.	A prosperous Wales; A healthier Wales; A more equal Wales; A Wales of vibrant culture and Welsh language.
Champion internationally excellent higher education that also works to support global well-being, and sustainable development.	A prosperous Wales; A resilient Wales; A healthier Wales; A globally responsible Wales.
Promote a system of HE that is financially, economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable.	A resilient Wales; A Wales of cohesive communities.
Ensure that HEFCW is an exemplar organisation where equality, partnership and sustainability are fundamental to delivery of our mission.	A more equal Wales; A prosperous Wales; A globally responsible Wales; A Wales of cohesive communities.

How we will deliver the well-being objectives

We will deliver our well-being objectives through embedding these objectives in our four key areas of work, and within the culture and governance of the organisation:

- Funding higher education in Wales
- Regulating higher education providers in Wales
- Influencing with evidence-based advice and strong partnership working
- Operating effectively as an organisation

We have a continuing role with the HE sector, partner bodies, and stakeholders in funding, regulating, and influencing the delivery of internationally excellent higher education in Wales notwithstanding the significant challenges and opportunities that the sector faces. The introduction of the Higher Education (Wales) Act 2015 has increasingly seen us move away from being predominantly a funding body to becoming more involved with access to, regulation, and quality of HE in Wales. This transition is not complete and significant further change is anticipated as the Welsh Government implements its response to the Diamond Review of Higher Education Funding and Student Finance Arrangements³ and considers detailed proposals for the reform of The Post-Compulsory Education and Training System in Wales, research and innovation funding arrangements and the establishment of a new commission.

Next steps

Fundamental to the effective delivery of our well-being objectives is our Corporate Strategy. It has been developed in accordance with the sustainable development principle, and will articulate in more detail how we can best contribute to the achievement of our four well-being objectives. This Corporate Strategy is different from previous similar documents. Given the range of contextual uncertainties outlined above, it is of necessity cast at a high level. It also focuses on what we will do as an organisation, rather than specifically on what we expect providers to deliver.

This is deliberate: our Corporate Strategy should set out the expectations for our own performance. It does not signal any diminution in our ambition for Wales to have the best performing higher education system possible, given the context within which we work. Through funding, regulation and influence, we will aim to create the environment within which higher education providers deliver sustainable, accessible and internationally excellent higher education. Delivery of the Corporate Strategy and the operational plan will be monitored by our Council on a quarterly basis and complemented by a published annual report.

³ <https://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/highereducation/reviews/review-of-he-funding-and-student-finance-arrangements/?skip=1&lang=cy>

Delivery against the well-being objectives will be ongoing throughout the life of our the 2017-20 Corporate Strategy. Reflecting on this and the anticipated level of change over the life of the strategy we intend to review our well-being objectives annually initially. This may become more frequent as the organisation is impacted by the significant policy and legislative changes that are anticipated over the next few years.