

Dr Andrew Goodall
Ysgrifennydd Parhaol
Permanent Secretary



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

27 May 2022

Dear Ms Rathbone MS

Response to the Equality and Social Justice Committee's report Annual scrutiny of the Future Generations Commissioner: An update

The Minister for Social Justice has set out the response to recommendations 2 and 4 of the report, which are addressed to the Welsh Government. As Permanent Secretary, I have provided the response to recommendation 3 below, which concerns the training and professional development of the Welsh Government civil service.

Yours,
Andrew Goodall

Dr Andrew Goodall
Ysgrifennydd Parhaol/ Permanent Secretary
Llywodraeth Cymru/ Welsh Government

Cc: First Minister, Minister for Social Justice, Minister for Finance and Local Government, Chair of the Public Accounts and Public Administration Committee, Future Generations Commissioner for Wales.



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Annual scrutiny of the Future Generations Commissioner: An update

Welsh Government response (May 2022)

Recommendation 3

The Welsh Government should set out how it uses training and professional development to ensure its employees fully understand and comply with the Act, so as to reduce the apparent need for reliance on the Commissioner's office.

Response: Accept

Through our work on policy capability, we have developed a new policy learning and development offer with updated content the Well-being of Future Generations Act's five ways of working at its core. This reflects our continuous learning in how the Act enables the civil service to support Ministers in delivering for Wales. The eight-module programme is available to all staff. We have also developed bespoke policy education programmes for new senior leaders that are explicitly focused on ensuring staff have a robust understanding of the Act and their obligations under it. In addition to this, we have reviewed and updated all our specialist policy learning on subjects such as futures thinking and co-production to ensure appropriate reference is made to the Act.

Alongside our revised policy offer and our behaviour change programme, we have developed a training for new staff that serves as an introduction to the Act and to the five ways of working. We continue to regularly review and quality assure our learning offer to ensure it meets learner needs in regards to Act.

I recently launched WG2025, our three-year programme for organisational development and a platform for the conversation with our workforce about the changes and improvements we need to make to operate in a post-pandemic, post-EU world. Through WG2025, we recognise sustainability will be a core principle of how we work now and in the future. Significant employee engagement activity is underway to inform our approach and ensure the activities we put in place as part of WG2025 support staff to put the principles of the Act and the five ways of working at the heart of how we behave and in everything we do. This approach reflects our ongoing commitment to making sustainable development the central organising principle of the Welsh Government civil service.

Welsh Government monitors how well staff are putting the Act's Sustainable Development Principle (five ways of working) into practice via its Internal Employee Research Programme, most recently in August-September 2021. Overall, survey results indicated that a high proportion of staff were putting the Sustainable Development Principle into practice, particularly in terms of how to prevent problems occurring or getting worse and considering the long-term impacts of our work, which had increased for most behaviours since they were last measured in 2020.

As a civil service, we involve a range of stakeholders and experts in the development and delivery of policies, and I am grateful for the insight and support the Commissioner has provided to ensure we work in a more sustainable way.

The Commissioner has suggested that the Welsh Government have accounted for around fifteen percent of the total requests for support received by her office since May 2018. Further analysis is required to establish the nature of these requests to substantiate claims of a 'heavy reliance' on the Commissioner by the Welsh Government and to what extent these requests for support stem from a lack of understanding of how to comply with the Act. Officials are working with the Commissioner to better understand the nature and quantity of these Welsh Government requests to provide a clearer picture on the situation and to help the Commissioner manage her resources.