



Using National Milestones and Indicators to Measure our Nation's Progress

A RESPONSE FROM WCVA

1. Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA) is the national membership organisation for the voluntary sector in Wales. Our purpose is to enable voluntary organisations to make a bigger difference together.
2. Rather than answer the questions set out in the consultation, we have chosen instead to focus on a small handful of key issues relating to this work of importance to the voluntary sector. We feel the specifics around the advantages and disadvantages of each milestone are best responded to by organisations specialising in those areas; however there are some cross-cutting issues which we would like to highlight.
3. We thank all those organisations who contributed to this response, including Wales Assembly of Women, The Co-Production Network for Wales, Llais y Goedwig, the Unitarians, Association of Voluntary Organisations Wrexham, the Woodland Trust, Size of Wales, Cytun, Cyngor ar Bopeth, Leonard Cheshire, British Red Cross, Torfaen Voluntary Alliance, NPTCVS and Wales Environment Link.

KEY MESSAGES ON MILESTONES AND INDICATORS

4. Milestones and indicators will have little impact, no matter what they are, if they are not:
 - Owned and understood widely by all, with a real focus on participation and coproduction. The voluntary sector has a key role to play here
 - Incorporated as a golden thread across all government programmes, funding and reporting regimes
 - Seen to represent out genuine measures of progress as a nation. [This report](#) by Carnegie UK Trust on Gross Domestic Wellbeing as a measure of social progress, and is

worth considering by Welsh Government

VOLUNTARY SECTOR INVOLVEMENT IN MILESTONES AND INDICATORS

5. WCVA launched a survey asking the voluntary sector for some thoughts on the National Milestones and Indicators programme and the representation of volunteering within it.
6. The responses to the survey suggest there is not a wide-ranging awareness the Indicators and Milestones programme. However, the majority of respondents suggested they felt it very important for the sector to be involved in this work.
7. Sector involvement is important because:
 - The sector is key in improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales, and its work will have a huge impact on if the milestones are reached
 - The milestones and indicators represent another way for the sector to demonstrate the difference it makes
 - Useful and user-friendly approaches to monitoring milestones should be co-produced
 - The sector is closer than anyone to the grassroots communities whose wellbeing will be the bedrock these indicators and milestones are based upon
 - The sector can identify programmes that already exist, upscale these where appropriate, and use cross-sector support to deliver outcomes that will make progress towards the indicators and milestones
 - The sector has a wealth of data and research to support Welsh Government in this programme
 - Volunteering is an excellent avenue for people to use and improve on their Welsh language skills, helping contribute to the milestone for a million Welsh speakers by 2050
8. The 'percentage of people who volunteer' indicator ultimately feeds into several milestones, including 'a million Welsh speakers by 2050', 'Wales will achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050', 'At least 90% of 16-24 year olds will be in education, employment or training by 2050', 'reduce the percentage of children with fewer than two healthy behaviours to 6% by 2035 and less than 1% by 2050', and 'Wales will only use its fair share of the world's resources by 2050'. There are a number of ways the voluntary sector can contribute to these milestones, including:

- Continued involvement in the co-design and delivery of services for communities
- Fortifying national recovery programmes post-COVID
- Helping overcome issues around digital inclusion
- Promotion of the voluntary sector as a desirable career option
- Ensuring the success of the preventative agenda
- Promoting the use of Welsh language
- By working with Welsh Government on policy development
- By supplying Welsh Government with invaluable data and information on communities and community issues

But the sector will need resource to deliver all this.

9. It should be noted that some organisations already report against the National Goals or have them embedded in their business plans. WCVA is investigating how it can do something similar.

VOLUNTEERING AS A MILESTONE

10. We asked if respondents felt that ‘the number of people volunteering’ should be a milestone of its own. There was a small majority for ‘yes’, but it would be hard to draw specific conclusions based on this. A number of survey respondents suggested that a milestone looking at the outcomes that occur from volunteering would be a better option than simply the number of volunteers.
11. However, we understand from meetings with Welsh Government officials that volunteering as a milestone is intended to be covered in a second consultation. We will comment further on this when that consultation is launched. We feel it is important to note, at this stage, that evidence suggests volunteering makes a strong contribution towards the goals of indicators 5, 14 and 37. Setting a milestone against National Wellbeing Indicator 28 and working towards it in the coming years, including increasing the frequency of data collection, will greatly benefit a number of interlinked indicators, delivering a comprehensive approach towards achieving the seven Wellbeing Goals of the Future Generations Act.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

12. We asked how respondents would feel if a requirement were introduced to those in receipt of Welsh Government funding, making it necessary to report how said funding contributed to the National Indicators. The majority believed this a good idea. Welsh

Government should consider this once the Milestones and Indicators are finalised, bearing in mind it is required to apply the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act to all spending.

13. If introduced as a reporting requirement, this would form part of the 'golden thread' referred to in point four, linking all government programmes, funding and reporting regimes to the Milestones and Indicators programme.

14. Members of the Third Sector Partnership Council could consider how their work contributes towards the indicators and milestones.

15. A review of progress against the Indicators should have been a key plank of the five-year report from the Future Generations Commissioner. It is disappointing that it was not.

DISCUSSION

16. WCVA will be pleased to discuss these or any other points relating to this consultation response with officials, committees or Ministers if requested.

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