Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru
Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

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Ymateb i Ymgynghoriad / Consultation Response

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Pwnc / Subject:	Using national milestones and indicators to measure our nation's progress

Background information about Estyn

Estyn is the Office of Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales. As a Crown body, Estyn is independent of the Welsh Government.

Estyn's principal aim is to raise the standards and quality education and training in Wales. This is primarily set out in the Learning and Skills Act 2000 and the Education Act 2005. In exercising its functions, Estyn must give regard to the:

- Quality of education and training in Wales;
- Extent to which education and training meets the needs of learners;
- Educational standards achieved by education and training providers in Wales;
- Quality of leadership and management of those education and training providers;
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of learners; and,
- Contribution made to the well-being of learners.

Estyn's remit includes (but is not exclusive to) nurseries and non-maintained settings, primary schools, secondary schools, independent schools, pupil referrals units, further education, adult community learning, local government education services, work-based learning, and teacher education and training.

Estyn may give advice to the Senedd Cymru on any matter connected to education and training in Wales. To achieve excellence for learners, Estyn has set three strategic objectives:

- Provide accountability to service users on the quality and standards of education and training in Wales;
- Inform the development of national policy by the Welsh Government;
- Build capacity for improvement of the education and training system in Wales.

This response is not confidential.

This response is also available in Welsh.

Response

Introduction

We are firm supporters of improving the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of Wales and the ground-breaking legislation in Wales in the form of the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

We agree that setting national milestones against the well-being indicators will help galvanise collective action, as well as helping to understand progress towards achievement of the well-being goals.

We support the first wave of national milestones in the proposed eight areas included in this consultation and have noted a number of considerations under the consultation questions. As requested, we also offer some thoughts on the changes to the indicator set. In summary, here are some of our key suggestions:

- We believe that the proposed national milestone for indicator No.5 should be more ambitious. We feel that the indicator should relate to the proportion of children who have fewer than **three** healthy lifestyle behaviours, as this will ensure that they must have at least one of the two behaviours relating to obesity.
- We are supportive of the national milestone to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 (No.41). We think it would be useful to establish an interim emissions target (as per milestone No.6 for health lifestyle behaviours) for 2035.
- Relating to the target of reaching a million Welsh speakers by 2050 (No.39), we note the importance of the 2021 Census and the fact that the Welsh language data is expected to be available by March 2023. At that time, it will be helpful to update the projection and trajectory to a million speakers.
- There is a need to ensure that a focus on national milestones does not mask progress (or lack of it) at a local level. Local inequities or poor progress can be masked by an overall positive average. So, 'local' as well as 'national' milestones will need to be set.
- Often 'what is measured gets done'. Nationally, there needs to be a check, as this project continues, of what is not being measured, and if an over focus on the indicators being measured is negatively impacting on those that are not. This will need periodic conscious reflection.
- In relation to including a national indicator on mode of travel, we suggest it would be useful to include a target about the proportion of children who walk/cycle/scoot, etc to school and we also suggest a target that relates to air quality.
- Regarding a national indicator on a minimum digital living standard, we certainly would not wish to dismiss this important issue but think it would be extremely difficult to define a minimum digital living standard in a way that will still be relevant in 2050 given how fast technology has moved in the last 29 years.
- Welsh Government may wish to consider including an additional milestone to the national indicator set relating to the mental health of children and young people.

Consultation questions

1. National milestones

Q1: Do you agree with the 2 proposed national milestones for indicator No.8: Percentage of adults with qualifications at the different levels of the National Qualifications Framework?

Yes   ☒

No   ☐

a) If yes, but you would like some changes, what would you change about the proposed national milestones?

> Milestone 1 (75% of working-age adults in Wales qualified to level 3 or higher) is a useful target. However, in order to achieve level 3 qualifications there needs to be appropriate progression pathways that allow citizens to attain the level 3 threshold. It is important to ensure that a focus on a level 3 threshold does not diminish the importance or availability of lower-level qualifications that act as progression steps towards the level 3 threshold.
>
> Given the very wide range in existing levels of adults without qualifications, Milestone 2 (working age adults with no qualifications <5% in every local authority in Wales) will represent a very different scale of challenge to different local authorities. It will be important to ensure that local targets are set, and resources appropriately allocated, to ensure that all local authorities improve, and that a national figure does not mask inequalities at a local level.

b) If no, please provide evidence for what a more suitable national milestone for Wales would be.

>

Q2: Do you agree with the proposed national milestone for indicator No.22 Percentage of people in education, employment or training (in different age groups)?

Yes   ☒

No   ☐

a) If yes, but you would like some changes, what would you change about the proposed national milestone?

> This is an appropriate milestone. In common with our response in question 1, it will be important that a national figure does not mask inequalities at a local level, and that appropriate local targets are set, resources allocated, and actions carried out.

b) If no, please provide evidence for what a more suitable national milestone for Wales would be.

>

Q3: Do you agree with the proposed national milestone for indicator No.21 Percentage of people in employment?

Yes   ☒

No   ☐

a) If yes, but you would like some changes, what would you change about the proposed national milestone?

A milestone which is relative to the rest of the UK is appropriate here, and the focus on groups currently under-represented in the labour market is welcomed.

b) If no, please provide evidence for what a more suitable national milestone for Wales would be.

Q4: Do you agree with the proposed national milestone for Indicator No.17 - Pay Equality – for gender, ethnicity and disability?

Yes   ☒

No   ☐

a) If yes, but you would like some changes, what would you change about the proposed national milestone?

No suggested changes.

b) If no, please provide evidence for what a more suitable national milestone for Wales would be.

Q5: Do you agree with the proposed national milestone for indicator No.5 Percentage of children who have fewer than 2 healthy lifestyle behaviours?

Yes   ☐

No   ☒

a) If yes, but you would like some changes, what would you change about the proposed national milestone?

We agree that it is useful to include a national milestone that relates to healthy lifestyle behaviours of children. However, we think that it needs to be more ambitious.

The indicator proposed for the milestone has already been met by 88% of children. Choosing a milestone that 88% of children already meet for a period that runs to 2050 is

not ambitious enough, especially given the challenges we currently see in the health of adults in Wales relating to the four healthy lifestyle behaviours connected to the indicator.

Two of the four behaviours are met by many children already – 81% of children never/rarely drank alcohol and 94% of children never smoked.

However, only 48% of children ate fruit or vegetables daily and only 18% of children met physical activity guidelines. These two behaviours have strong causal links to obesity and related health issues. If Wales is to reduce obesity levels in the adult population in the future, we need to see a much higher proportion of children eating healthy food and being more active.

We therefore feel that the indicator should relate to the proportion of children who have fewer than three healthy lifestyle behaviours, as this will ensure that they must have at least one of the two behaviours relating to obesity.

Over 50% of children currently have fewer than three healthy behaviours, so this will make for a more impactful indicator to set ambitious milestones against.

b) If no, please provide evidence for what a more suitable national milestone for Wales would be.

Q6: Do you agree with the proposed national milestone for indicator No.14 Ecological Footprint of Wales?

Yes   ☒

No   ☐

a) If yes, but you would like some changes, what would you change about the proposed national milestone?

Yes, we agree with the milestone and agree with the renaming of this measure as the 'Global Footprint of Wales' to better reflect Wales using only its fair share of the earth's resources.

b) If no, please provide evidence for what a more suitable national milestone for Wales would be.

Q7: Do you agree with adopting the existing Net-Zero greenhouse gas emissions target as a national milestone?

Yes   ☒

No   ☐

b) If no, please provide evidence for what a more suitable national milestone for Wales would be.

> We agree with the national milestone to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. We think that it would be useful to establish an interim emissions target (as per milestone 6 for health lifestyle behaviours) for 2035.

Q8: Do you agree with adopting the existing Cymraeg 2050 target of reaching a million Welsh speakers by 2050 as a national milestone?

Yes   ☒

No   ☐

b) If no, please provide evidence for what a more suitable national milestone for Wales would be.

Comments in relation to Yes:

> We agree with the national milestone to adopt the existing Cymraeg 2050 target. The Cymraeg 2050: our plans for 2021 to 2026 (Welsh Government, 2021) clearly identifies the action and progress that is needed to achieve this ambitious target. For example, it demonstrates how working collaboratively with various partners such as the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol and the National Centre for Learning Welsh, will have in developing learners' Welsh language acquisition.
>
> The plan also states that establishing a further 46 Welsh Cylchoedd Meithrin (target was 40) will further support the trend in the percentage of children moving from early years settings to Welsh-medium primary schools (86% 2015-2016 – 90% 2018-2019). However, achieving the targets for the education workforce in general has been more challenging. There were 2,789 Welsh-medium primary teachers in the 2019 to 2020 academic year compared to the target in Cymraeg 2050 for 2021 of 3,100, a deficit of 311 (10.0%). In 2019 to 2020 there were 2,339 secondary teachers teaching in Welsh compared to the target of 2,800 for 2021, a deficit of 500 (16.5%).
>
> The Cymraeg 2050 plan also states that 'The COVID-19 pandemic has meant that many of our interventions and those of our partners have had to change or cease, and new interventions have had to be created. We don't yet know what all the implications of the pandemic will be on meeting the Cymraeg 2050 targets, but we've been focusing on several aspects including education, the social use of Welsh, and the socio-economic fabric of communities where Welsh is a community language'. In parallel, as part of Estyn's engagement calls and visits to providers during 2020-2021, we acknowledge that practitioners adapted their provision in challenging circumstances to best meet the needs of learners, especially whilst delivering activities to support learners from non-Welsh speaking homes to develop their skills in Welsh. Engagement work: Primary sector update - autumn 2020. However, it is too soon to measure the impact of the pandemic on learners' Welsh acquisition skills.
>
> With the introduction of Curriculum for Wales in 2022, leaders and practitioners will incorporated the four purposes of the curriculum with the aim of supporting learners to gain further access to developing their Welsh skills in rich language and integrated activities across the six Areas of learning and experience. The principles of progression set out in the progression code is pivotal in measuring learners progress in Welsh. However, suitable provision for learners to continue their education in local providers

through the medium of Welsh in the post-16 sector needs to be reinforced, as outlined in our report on [Post-16 partnerships: Shared planning and provision between schools, and between schools and colleges](#) (January, 2021). The Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol notes in its [Further Education and Apprenticeship Welsh-medium Action Plan](#) that this sector 'has not had the same strategic focus for investment compared with, for example, the Higher Education sector'.

The [School Organisation Code](#) (Welsh Government, 2018) reorganisation of schools categorisation act will promote the use of Welsh by learners from different starting points in all schools across Wales. This will support providers to develop their settings to promote 'A Wales of vibrant culture and Thriving Welsh language'. (Indicator 37)

In line with [Guidance on Welsh in Education Strategic Plans](#) (Welsh Government, 2021), all local authorities are planning to deliver a 10 year plan which will strive to make 'every learner one in a million' (p2), and will hopefully contribute consistently towards achieving milestone 9.

The 2021 Census was carried out in Wales in March 2021 and the Office for National Statistics (which is responsible for the census in England and Wales) intends to publish all 2021 Census data within 24 months of the census. The Welsh language data is therefore expected to be available by March 2023. At that time, it will be possible to update the projection and trajectory to a million speakers.

Q9: How do you think we should communicate the national milestones and national well-being indicators with the people and communities of Wales?

- Use the Well-being of Future Generations Act – 'essentials guide' (3rd edition) to promote the national wellbeing indicators and involve the public bodies included in the Act in communicating these milestones and indicators.
- Link in with publicity around COP26 in Glasgow and United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.
- Harness the enthusiasm (for promoting 'well-being and environmental issues) of youth organisations, schools and further and higher education institutions. Prepare short videos for teachers / community leaders to use.
- Through the role of the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales.
- Seek collaboration and partnership across the public sector and with the private sector.

Q10: We are keen to gather evidence on the potential impacts and opportunities of achieving all the national milestones, and in particular, any dependencies between them. For example, there could be unintended consequences of making progress towards achieving a national milestone on another national milestone, or opportunities to deliver wider benefits between national milestones. Please use this space to provide evidence of these connections and interdependencies.

> There is a need to ensure that a focus on national milestones does not mask progress (or lack of it) at a local level. Local inequities or poor progress can be masked by an overall positive average. So, 'local' as well as 'national' milestones will need to be set. Planning will need to be suitably differentiated to account for that.
>
> Often 'what is measured gets done'. Nationally, there needs to be a check, as this project continues, of what is not being measured, and if an over focus on the indicators that are measured is negatively impacting on those that are not. This will need periodic conscious reflection.

2. National indicators

Mode of travel
Q11: Do you think an indicator on mode of travel should be added to the existing national indicator set?

Yes   ☒

No   ☐

a) If "Yes", please provide the idea(s) or concept(s) you would like the indicator to capture?

> We note Llwybr Newydd A New Wales Transport Strategy 2021: full strategy (gov.wales) – sector 5.5 refers to data on modes and sector. The document says that given the pandemic and the uncertainty of how this will affect travel patterns in the long term, Welsh Government will need to keep targets and measures under review.
>
> We suggest including a target that relates to air quality (e.g. NO_2 levels) would be better than one about mode of travel (see WG35619 (gov.wales).
>
> However, we also think it would be useful to include a target about the proportion of children who walk/cycle/scoot etc to school.

b) If "No", why would this not form an appropriate indicator?

>

c) Are you aware of a data source(s) that could be used to measure this indicator?

>

Minimum digital living standard

Q12: Do you think an indicator on a minimum digital living standard should be added to the existing indicator set?

Yes ☒

No ☐

a) If "Yes", please provide the idea(s) or concept(s) you would like the indicator to capture?

Lack of access to the internet / digital resources was a problem for many learners during the pandemic – e.g. poor internet access, slow broadband / mobile wifi connections etc. A digital living standard would help keep this issue in focus.

However, we think this is very difficult given the focus is on 2050, 29 years away. Consider how far technology has moved in the last 29 years – Google didn't exist 29 years ago and neither did broadband internet in the UK. No one knows how technology will change over the next 29 years, so it would be extremely difficult to define a minimum digital living standard in a way that will still be relevant in 2050. That's not to dismiss the issue, of course, just a recognition that measures over such an extended timeframe may not be helpful.

b) If "No", why would this not form an appropriate indicator?

c) Are you aware of a data source(s) that could be used to measure this indicator?

Indicator 33 - Percentage of dwellings with adequate energy performance
(measured using the Standard Assessment Procedure)

Q13: Do you think indicator 33 "percentage of dwellings with adequate energy performance" should be changed?

Yes ☐

No ☐

a) If "Yes" to question 12, please provide the idea(s) or concept(s) you would like the indicator to capture?

We do not feel well placed to offer a view on this.

b) If "No" to question 11, why would this not form an appropriate indicator?

c) Are you aware of a data source(s) that could be used to measure this indicator?

Additional gaps to the national indicator set

Q14: We would also welcome your views on any further gaps you feel the COVID-19 pandemic may have highlighted in the way we measure progress towards our well-being goals?

If you would like to propose an additional indicator, please provide the following information:

- What is the name of the proposed indicator?
- What is the data source for this indicator?
- Please provide an explanation for why this indicator best measures the well-being of Wales
- Which well-being goals does the indicator directly impact on?

Welsh Government may wish to consider including a milestone relating to the mental health of children and young people.

A milestone could relate to one or more indicators from the biennial student health behaviour survey run by Schools Health Research Network such as young people's Short Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing score, UCLA (University of California, Los Angeles) 3-item loneliness score and SDQ (Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire) score. There is already baseline and historical data from this survey that would support the setting of a milestone.

Q15: We would like to know your views on the effects that this policy would have on the Welsh language, specifically on opportunities for people to use Welsh and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than English.

What effects do you think there would be? How could positive effects be increased, or negative effects be mitigated?

The proposed national milestones clearly outlined within this policy will support both the Welsh and English language equally. The strategic opportunities will further guide planning to ensure equity for all between both languages.

Q16: Please also explain how you believe the proposed policy could be formulated or changed so as to have positive effects or increased positive effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language, and no adverse effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.

The proposed policy supports the opportunities in a strategic and balanced approach. There is no evidence that it will have a positive or negative effect on the Welsh or English language.

Q17: We have asked a number of specific questions. If you have any related issues which we have not specifically addressed, please use this space to report them:

Responses to consultations may be made public. To keep your response anonymous (including email addresses) tick the box.

Keep my response anonymous   ☐