



Blaenau Gwent Well-being Assessment

*A broad picture of well-being
in Blaenau Gwent*



BWRDD GWASANAETHAU CYHOEDDUS
Blaenau Gwent
PUBLIC SERVICE BOARD

Blaenau Gwent

Well-being Assessment

Published Assessment

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<http://www.blaenauwentpsb.org.uk/well-being-assessment.aspx>

Disclaimer: This assessment has been produced and published under the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. This published document is part of an on-going approach to assessing the well-being of Blaenau Gwent, and as a consequence it will be updated as appropriate.

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1 A welcome

Welcome to Blaenau Gwent Public Services Board Well-being Assessment.

The purpose of this document is to present an assessment of well-being which will help the newly formed Public Services Board for the area to set objectives for an exciting new plan for the local area.

This assessment of well-being is a vital part of journey to develop our plan, as it provides an accurate analysis, summarising the plethora of evidence that is available to us for understanding the economic, social, environment and cultural conditions for well-being.

This is an assessment which has been developed collaboratively with a wide range of partner organisations contributing evidence. It also benefits from significant input from local people, following our really successful engagement programme, “The Blaenau Gwent We Want”.

If you are reading this assessment, we really want you stay involved in this on-going exciting process of well-being planning. If you have not already done so, I would urge you, or the organisation you represent, to join one of our engagement panels.

The next step for us is to set well-being objectives which will start the process of us creating a plan for our area. This plan will be ready by April 2018 and focus on tackling the most important issues which will have a positive effect improving the economic, social, culture and environmental well-being of our wonderful area, both the present and future.

Chair of Blaenau Gwent Public Services Board



2. Introduction

2.1 Overview

Blaenau Gwent is always changing, and as we play our part in those changes we need to think about making sustainable interventions today that will lead to positive, long-term outcomes for future generations.

The last 30 years have seen the area presented with a range of new social, economic and environmental challenges and opportunities as we have moved from our traditional industrial past, and looked to improve our immediate future.

The main issue driving this change has been the loss of the traditional economic base. Closing the coal and steel industries has led to an overall loss in jobs, as we move towards an economy where our manufacturing and service jobs have to compete with the world's emerging regions and countries.

Also, the way we live our lives has changed. We are influenced by technology, which has led to significant changes in the way we shop, communicate, enjoy our free time, and benefit from services such as health, care and education.

There have also been significant pressures worldwide, with factors such as population growth and a dependence on fossil fuels putting pressure on our environment. This has brought issues such as oil prices and climate change into every living room in Blaenau Gwent. However, the move away from our industrial past has had a significant improvement in our local environment and landscapes as our area regains the green landscapes of the distant past.

These are some of the central issues that our area has been challenged within the last 20 years. Some of these challenges have been difficult and still give us cause for concern and problems today, such as employment. Others, such as improvements in our environment and technological advancements have been more positive and have led to clear improvements in people's lives.

This document assesses the current well-being of our area. We cannot present all the evidence in one document, so this document will summarise the analysis of key issues which have been identified. Where appropriate, further information will be available for consideration.

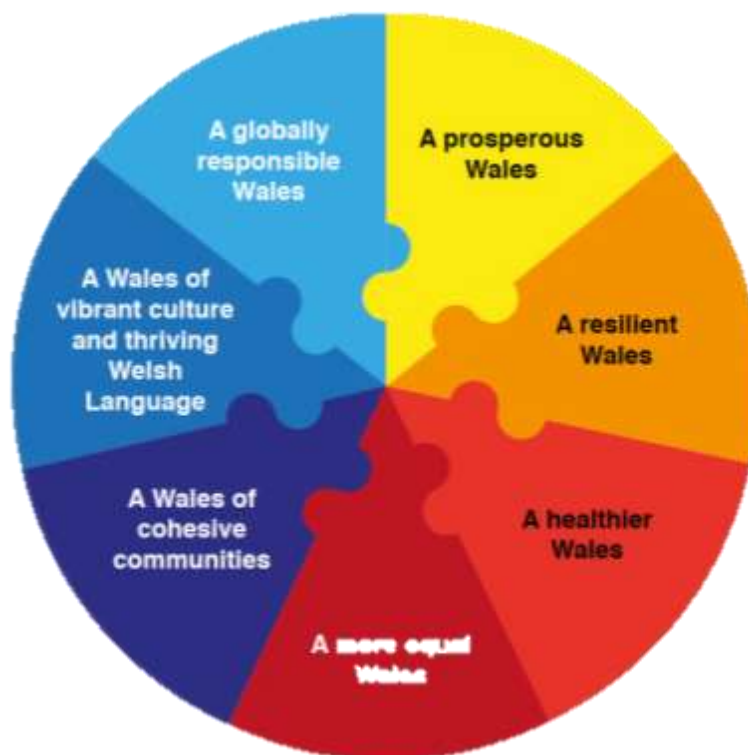
2.2 Context

In 2015, the National Assembly for Wales passed a new law for Wales called the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The legislation is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, and creating a Wales that we all want to live in, now and in the future.

The ground-breaking piece of legislation places sustainable development at its core and places a statutory duty on our public service sector (covered by the Act) to: think about the long-term; work better with people and communities and each other; look to prevent problems; and take a more joined-up approach. This is known as the five ways of working.

To make sure we are all working towards the same vision, the Act puts in place seven well-being goals for everyone in Wales to aspire towards.

I01: National Well-being Goals for Wales



Source: Welsh Government

I02: Local Perception of the new law for Wales

A Better Future

Llanhilleth is a wonderful place, we are winning this race!

But what could make it better? To the Council we should write a letter.

Should we make a new law? Or leave it like before?

Is change good? Should we change?

Yes, we should, because change is good.

It's all for the better, let's all be law setters.

What new laws should we make?

Now we have all the ingredients to bake!

The lake are blue, the grass is greener,

We have been fighting like John Cena,

We are so much keener.

Source: Poem wrote by two children representing their school at a special
'Blaenau Gwent We Want' session of the Blaenau Gwent School Grand
Council in October 2016.

Our Well-being Duties

The Act places a number of statutory duties on public bodies both as individual organisations, and as partners working together through a new partnership board called a Public Services Board (PSB).

This document relates to statutory duties for working together through a Public Services Board.

The Blaenau Gwent Public Services Board was set up in April 2016 as a statutory requirement, and replaced the Local Service Board, which was established in 2009 to take forward the Single Integrated Plan.

***Note:** The current Single Integrated Plan is now the responsibility of the Blaenau Gwent Public Services Board until its completion at the end of 2017.*

Each Public Services Board in Wales has a duty to prepare an assessment of well-being in its area by April 2017.

This assessment must then be used to prepare a Well-being plan. The plan must continue implementing Well-being objectives for the public services board collectively, which are designed to maximise the Board's contribution to the Well-being goals for Wales.

To support Public Services Boards in meeting their statutory requirements, the Welsh Government have provided both statutory and non-statutory guidance.

The **Statutory Guidance**, *Shared Purpose: Shared Future SPSF3* Collective Role (public services boards), in Chapter 2 provides guidance on assessing the state of well-being in the area.

Furthermore, additional non-statutory guidance was provided to Public Services Boards on the **use of evidence and analysis to support the assessment process**.

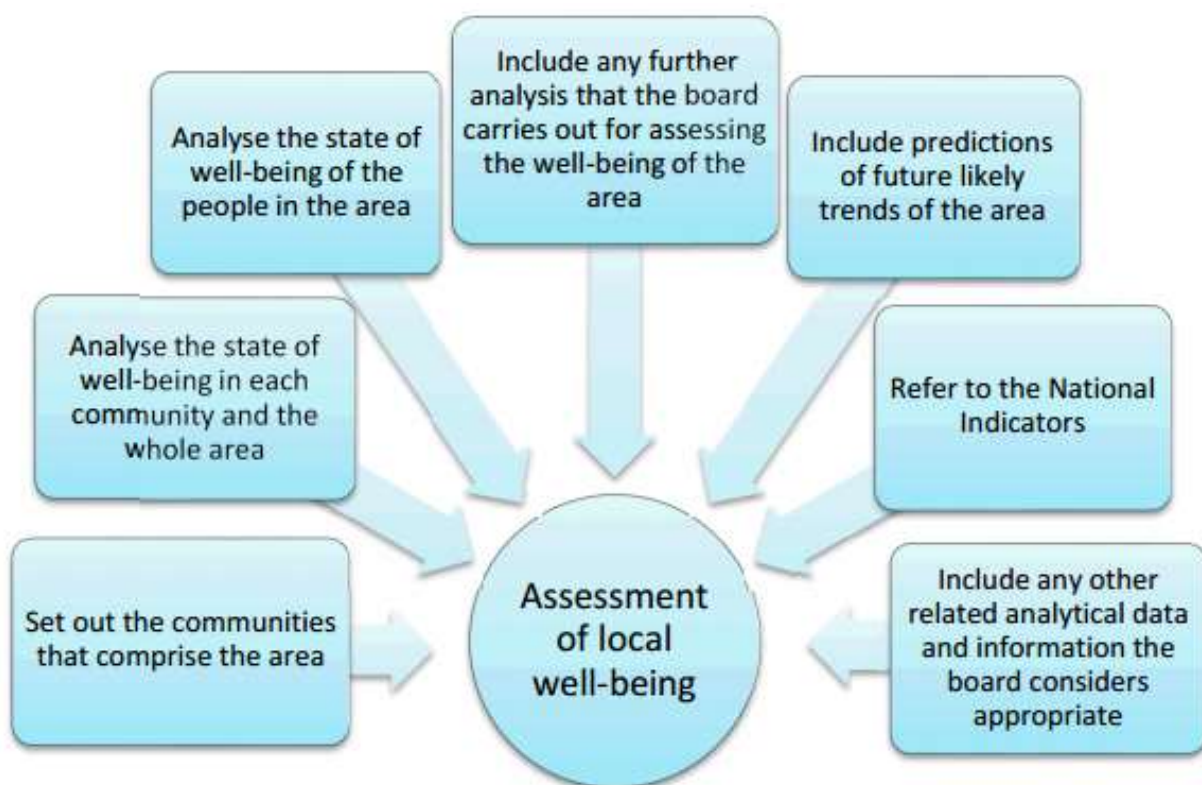
Assessing the state of well-being in Blaenau Gwent

An accurate analysis of the state of well-being in our area is important, as it will play a vital role in helping the Public Services Board to develop the Well-being plans containing our local Well-being objectives.

There is an expectation that each assessment will use a broad range of evidence sources to help assess the state of well-being, for example census and statistical data; academic research; and qualitative evidence which captures people's opinions and perceptions as well as giving context to quantitative data (the story behind the data). These comparisons could take place at a national, regional or local level.

In preparing an assessment of well-being our Public Services Board must consider Figure I03 outlined below.

I03: What an assessment must cover



Source: *P13, SPSF 3, Shared Purpose: Shared Future, Collective role (public services boards)*

2.3 Approaching our assessment in Blaenau Gwent

At the Blaenau Gwent PSB meeting in July 2016 the Board agreed an overarching Well-being Assessment and Plan timetable to ensure it was able to meet statutory requirements outlined above.

The plan focused around the two specific strands of Analysis and Engagement, both with vital roles in collating the data and information to help shape the assessment of well-being.

Situational and Response Analysis

The [non-statutory guidance](#) on the production of well-being assessments outlined an evaluative approach to carry out assessments, using a situational and response analyses approach.

Situational Analysis focuses around carrying out analysis, which outlines a broad picture of the economic, social, environmental and cultural conditions in an area. This type of analysis should look to include information from statistical sources, engagement and involvement exercises, and also credible research which has been carried out. This would be supported by further analysis to understand these conditions, giving more detail of conditions for different geographical communities and groups of people.

Response Analysis is more detailed in nature and focuses on helping partners understand from evidence what can be done to help achieve defined objectives. This analysis will:

- enrich understanding of the factors that affect issues within areas;
- develop the understanding of how, and to what extent, existing services are addressing those issues;
- help to identify and appraise alternative approaches to delivery; and

- consider how future economic, social, environmental and cultural, trends will affect local areas.

There is no clear divide between where situational analysis finishes - if it does - and where response analysis begins. However, for the initial process of assessing the well-being of an area, a situational approach will be used, whereby a broad picture of the economic, social, environmental and cultural conditions of our area will be developed.

Blaenau Gwent Approach to Situational Analysis

The approach to situational analysis has looked to meet requirements of the statutory and non-statutory guidance.

Specific consideration has been given to the most effective way to take forward the analysis, through a standardised approach which paints a broad picture of an area's well-being using the common data set developed for the Welsh Government by the Local Government Data Unit Wales.

To facilitate a standard approach a 'Gwent Footprint' was proposed with the other four local authority areas in Gwent, as all areas have the same regional and national statutory partners i.e. Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, South Wales Fire and Rescue Service, and Natural Resources Wales.

To ensure this was taken forward in the appropriate manner, the Gwent Strategic Well-being Assessment Group (GSWAG) was formed with representation from statutory partners from the region and additional regional partners (e.g. invited partners from the PSBs) such as Gwent Police and Public Health Wales.

The groups remit was to identify and progress a consistent methodology and strategic approach that develops the key principles and actions enabling a regional approach for the undertaking of well-being assessments as required within the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

Furthermore, Welsh Government provided access to a 'regional grant' to support the production of situational analysis for 2016/17. GSWAG successfully secured the grant from Welsh Government to commission analytical expertise from the Local Government Data Unit Wales (LGDU) to support the production of well-being assessments across the region.

The LGDU developed a regional product covering all five local authority areas pulling together key statistics on economic, social, environment and cultural issues. Following this the LGDU have worked with each local authority area on individual products to aid the development of local-based draft well-being assessments (which is this document).

Our proposed approach to Response Analysis

The Well-being Assessment for Blaenau Gwent will be used by the Public Service Board to identify a finite set of indicative priorities to help shape the well-being objectives for the local well-being plan.

Following this, response analysis can be tailored for the indicative priorities, allowing for detailed investigation to be carried out to understand the issues, and identify potential actions for solutions.

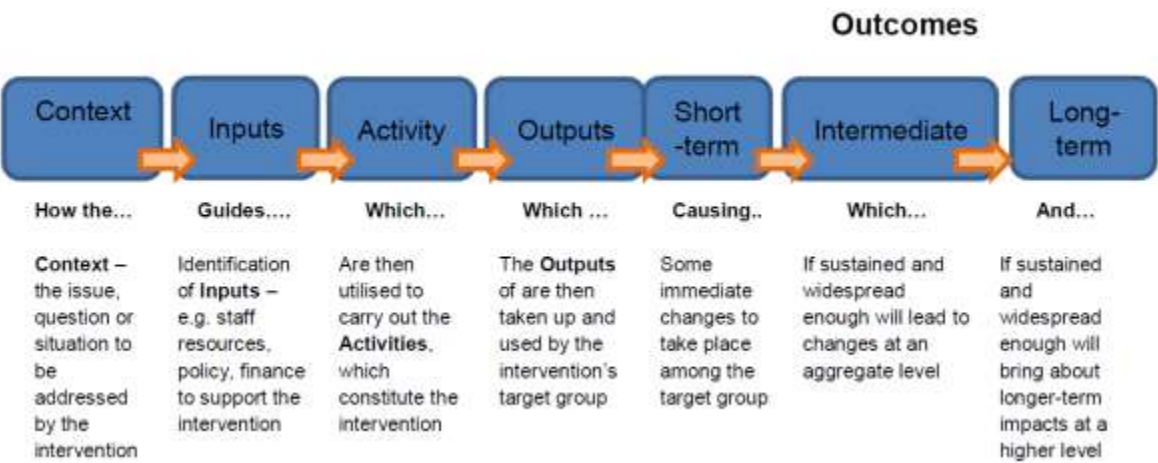
This process will be carried out because it has become clear that it is not feasible to carry out a response analysis approach for the full range of economic, social, environmental and cultural conditions that contribute to the well-being of a local area.

In carrying out a response analysis it will be important to follow a model which allows for full consideration of the factors that are affecting a defined objective.

The model to be used, which is supported by the non-statutory guidance for PSB on evidence and analysis, is a theory of change, logic model.

This models looks to aid decision-making by identifying the most effective options to tackle an issue by evaluating a number of key factors, including ‘inputs’, activities, outputs and outcomes as summarised in Figure I04 below.

I04: Defined Logic Model for Response Analysis



Source: *Welsh Government*

Our Approach to Engagement



Engaging people on developing this assessment has been seen as crucial by the PSB, particularly as one of the five ways of working towards sustainable development is involvement. To ensure this, the PSB agreed that a specific engagement programme, called 'The Blaenau Gwent We Want' would be implemented.

The engagement programme was launched as an on-going conversation whereby there would be plenty of opportunity for people to share their views on shaping the well-being assessment and the subsequent well-being plan. Each year there will be an Annual Programme of Engagement, with a number of phases each year.

Phase one – starting a conversation on well-being

Phase one of the first Annual Programme was launched in August 2016 to get people involved in a conversation about our area in 2016, and what is wanted for our area in the future. The principle of the programme was to get as many people as possible to take part and have their views heard.

To help this, there were no set rules on how people could take part. People were encouraged to get involved by a variety of methods including attending local events, filling in questionnaires, using social media, sending back postcards, completing drawings, writing stories or poems, drafting future profiles, taking photographs, or holding their own events.

To support phase one an **Inspiration Pack** was developed with guidance on participation, and questions and topics for consideration. Also included were ideas, examples and templates to support participation.

Engagement activities held across our area, included:

- Four 'Blaenau Gwent We Want' sessions in our four main town centres, i.e.. Abertillery, Brynmawr, Ebbw Vale, and Tredegar
- National Play Day and Family Fun Day events around the area
- Three 'Splash' play events around the area
- A special joint 50+ Network and Access for All Equality Forum
- Blaenau Gwent Youth Forum
- Children's Grand Council
- UNCRC Family Event
- Communities First Events

Also, a number of sessions were held by specific representative groups, including:

- Dementia Café
- Blaenau Gwent People's First
- Blaenau Gwent Stroke Group
- Sight Cymru
- Abertillery School Transition
- Mind
- Big Hafal Tea Party
- Snap Cymru
- Armed Forces Veterans Coffee Morning

The methods of participating in the first phase of the Blaenau Gwent We Want allowed for active engagement with the general public and with people from a range of key representative groups including, people with physical or mental disabilities, older people, children and young people, and carers. Further work continues to seek active engagement with representative groups.

Overall, involvement in the phase one of 'The Blaenau Gwent We Want' was seen as positive with significant feedback including:

- Over 150 questionnaires returned
- Over 400 'BG We Want' postcards completed at events or posted back
- Over 300 drawings or illustrations submitted from children and young people.
- 16 large 'graffiti' sheets summarising some of the key sessions held across the borough
- 62 Future Trees completed by representative groups held by Communities First
- 42 Future leaves from the joint 'Access for All' and Older People event.

Approximately 1,000 residents were engaged with (across all groups) during the first engagement phase. The feedback was divided into individual 'statements'. Many respondents provided more than one statement, with over 2,500 individual well-being statements being provided.

The feedback from Phase 1 has been processed and is summarised in a [feedback report](#), but more importantly is referenced throughout this well-being assessment.

Look out for information in the following chapters under the heading 'what we know from engagement' which will look to summarise key information captured from 'The Blaenau Gwent We Want' in the relevant sections.



Phase two - formally consulting on a draft assessment

A draft well-being assessment was put out for formal consultation for a four-week period from 1 February to 28 February 2017. The formal consultation was hosted on the Public Services Board's new website:

www.blaenaugwentpsb.org.uk



For the formal consultation, chapters and sub sections of the overall document were uploaded as individual PDFs. It was felt that this would improve the opportunity for people to respond through a formal questionnaire process, set up specifically to draw feedback from participants.

During the formal consultation process 27 questionnaires were completed. A clear majority of respondents felt the draft assessment was clear, and provided an accurate assessment of well-being in the area.

The formal consultation was also supported by further engagement sessions of the 'Blaenau Gwent We Want' programme. In total, 18 public engagement events were held during the month throughout the area. This included: sessions in Ebbw Vale, Abertillery, Tredegar and Brynmawr towns/market; day and evening session at local supermarkets; and sessions with specific interested groups, e.g. the School Grand Council, Youth Forum, 50+ Engagement Group, Town and Community Councils, and voluntary and community groups. At each session a summary of the findings of the draft well-being assessment were presented on display boards. Attendees at these sessions were actively promoted to participate and share their views, through methods of their choice (e.g. post-it sticky, postcards and questionnaires etc.)

Over 620 people were engaged during these sessions, with 1,270 comments received. 95% of those considering the information agreed that the information presented accurately described the Blaenau Gwent they knew.

Furthermore, a number of stakeholders responded to the process by submitted a general written response. These responses include the formal response from The Future Generations Commissioner for Wales, Welsh Government and the Blaenau Gwent Public Service Board Scrutiny Committee.

The Future Generations Commissioner acknowledged the scale of the work in developing the draft, outlined that the approach was generally good, and commended the engagement programme 'The Blaenau Gwent We Want'. The commissioner outlined a series of recommendation for the PSB to consider to help shape the well-being assessment. This included aligning the assessment to the national well-being goals, further strategic insight into some of the challenges facing the areas being presented within the assessment, greater integration between the chapters and sub-sections presented, and larger contributions from the social and cultural chapters.

The Welsh Government noted that the draft assessment did meet all the statutory requirements outlined in the guidance, and as with the Commissioner, noted the involvement of the local community in developing the assessment. Their response, however, did make a series of recommendations including applying more consistency to the document, consider ways to make it more interactive, improve the balance and comprehensiveness of the sections, increase engagement with marginalised groups, improve understanding of future trends and scenarios, consider evidence gaps and outline a data development agenda (DDA), and strengthen the links to the array of qualitative information collated from the engagement programme.

Blaenau Gwent Public Service Board Scrutiny Committee noted the overall approach was effective and that the draft assessment looked to reflect the requirements of the statutory guidance. The committee outlined general comments about: ensuring the future well-being plan is aligned to existing national, regional and local strategies; consideration given to evaluating existing interventions such as anti-poverty programmes; supporting an asset based approach to well-being planning; and considering local and sub local geographies for setting well-being objectives as part of the well-being plan. The Committee made no formal recommendations to the Public Service Board.

The responsibility of prioritisation

Following the completion of the formal consultation process, the Strategic Support Group (SSG), which supports the Blaenau Gwent PSB held a workshop to consider the draft assessment and prioritise a series of key issues which had been identified by stakeholders from across public services board organisations.

The workshop completed a prioritisation process which was designed and implemented following collaborative work from representatives from public services board organisations. The focus of the model was consideration of the key features of the Act, with a focus on the five ways of working towards sustainable development (e.g. long term, prevention, integration, collaboration, involvement) and how the issues identified were linked to the national well-being goals.

In total, 46 issues were identified, and following discussion at the workshop 31 issues were processed through an agreed scoring system for prioritisation. Collaboratively the attendees agreed collective scores for each individual issue following debate. The prioritisation process for each identified issue is summarised in the measure sections of the economic, social, cultural and environmental chapters of this well-being assessment.

Setting indicative priorities for the well-being plan

The PSB will use this well-being assessment to guide them in outlining a set of indicative priorities to be considered for the next phase of the well-being planning process – e.g. response analysis and logic mapping.

The PSB will set these indicative priorities at a special PSB meeting on Monday 24 April 2017, before agreeing a set of draft well-being objectives in July 2017.



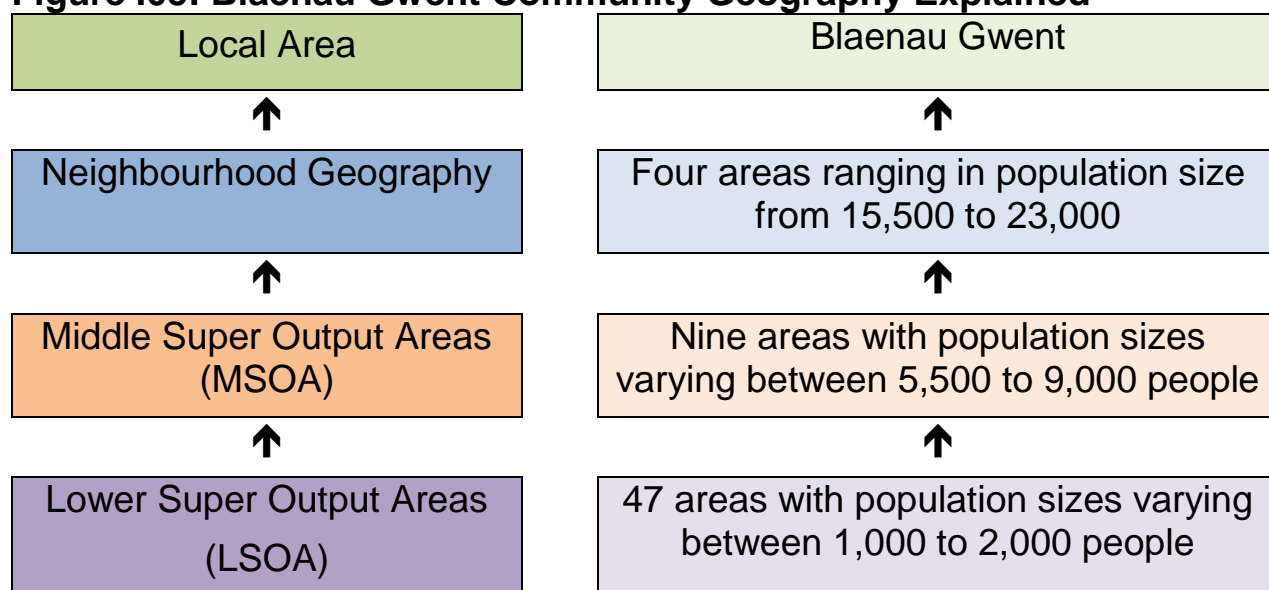
2.4 Defining our communities in Blaenau Gwent

Blaenau Gwent's communities and neighbourhoods have been shaped by our landscapes and social history. Our distinctive valley landscape has led to the area having towns surrounded by neighbourhoods and settlements clustered around the valley floors and adjacent hill sides.

This assessment will be based around the area as a whole, and four specific geographic areas inside Blaenau Gwent, known as our neighbourhood geography (defined by the Single Integrated Plan 2013/17).

These four areas are made up of smaller geographical areas, and where appropriate (e.g. where the data is available) the assessment will consider smaller areas which fit within the four neighbourhood areas. These smaller geographies will be based on the national statistical geography and are called Middle Super Output Areas (MSOAs) and Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs). This will allow us, where it adds value, to present comparable statistical information to a low geographical level. Figure I05 below summarises hierarchy of the geography that is being used for this assessment.

Figure I05: Blaenau Gwent Community Geography Explained



2.5 How this assessment is set out

The remainder of this document is focused on presenting a summary analysis of well-being for the Blaenau Gwent area.

There are five subsequent chapters. The first of the chapters acts as an introductory chapter and focuses on providing an overview of the area, outlining the communities within our area and the people that live within in them. It considers a broad overview of the Blaenau Gwent area, summarising key statistical information, and outlining key future trends and summary information from the 'The Blaenau We Want' engagement programme. Each chapter also provides an overview of the four neighbourhood areas in the Blaenau Gwent.

The remaining chapters are aligned to the well-being or sustainable development pillars i.e., Social, Economic, Environment and Cultural. Each of these chapters has a number of sections which will act as 'well-being measures' and provide the relevant statistical information on the defined the measure.

Each of the measures outlined in the four well-being chapters were identified following a the piece of research carried out by the Local Government Data Unit, which considered the national catalogue for data derived to support the national well-being goals. This research was presented to a special workshop of the Strategic Support Group, which supports the PSB, held on 24 November 2016.

At the workshop the SSG agreed the structure and agreed a set of measures/sections to be developed for the draft assessment.

2.6 Embracing the five ways of working

Crucial to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 are [five sustainable development principles](#). These principles outline how a PSB should go about meeting their collective duties to ensure decisions and responsibilities take account of the impact they could have on people living their lives in Wales now, and in the future.

The information below shows how the development of this Well-Being Assessment has embraced the five ways of working throughout the overall process:

Collaboration

Acting in collaboration with anybody that could help the PSB to meet its well-being objectives

Collaboration in this assessment process

The drafting of this Well-Being Assessment has a collaborative approach at its very centre. It has directly involved stakeholders from the existing Blaenau Gwent Strategic Partnership, which supports the Blaenau Gwent PSB, in the planning and development of the draft Well-Being Assessment. Specific examples of our collaborative approach include:

- The PSB collectively agreed a collaborative based approach to the overall plan for well-being planning in July 2016;
- The implementation of both phases of engagement for the 'Blaenau Gwent We Want' programme which were run to support the development of this assessment. This included the Blaenau Gwent Engagement Partnership group specifically leading the engagement programme for the PSB.

- The collaborative collating of statistics and information for the drafting of the well-being sections by key staff from across the Public Services Board organisations.
- Partnership workshops of the PSB Strategic Support Group to consider key issues for the assessment, including setting the draft structure and content (November 2016), and carrying out the prioritisation process to support the PSB to agree indicative priorities for well-being planning (March 2017)

Moving forward with the well-being plan

A collaborative approach will be fundamental in the next phase of the well-being planning process. The indicative priorities agreed by PSB will be considered for response analysis, with all relevant partner organisations and interested parties working together to identify what steps can be carried out to tackle the issues identified as part of this assessment.

Prevention

How acting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse may help the PSB meet their objectives.

The approach in developing this Well-Being Assessment, has sought to identify where preventative actions can impact on the well-being goals, and to understand how we can work with partners and the public in identifying enabling solutions that work. This assessment process has begun to explore and capture what these solutions might look like. Specific examples of our preventative approach include:

Prevention in this assessment process

- The PSB has made it clear, in its development sessions in July 2016, that whilst it wants to move forward with solutions based on good

evidence and practice, it is also keen to take risks in developing innovative preventative approaches.

- Each of the sections in the four well-being chapters contains information which looks to identify what could be done to help prevent the critical issues identified as part of assessment process.
- Each of the sections in the four well-being chapters also contains information on what research already has been carried out to help develop a response to the critical issues.
- The section '*Thinking to our Future – An Overview of Strategic Challenges and Opportunities*' looks to identify some of the main high-level strategic issues facing the area, and identify the key challenges and opportunities each issue offers.

Moving forward with the well-being plan

Considering the preventative opportunities that exist in response to the developing of a well-being plan will be crucial. The logic mapping approach to response analysis will ensure that appropriate consideration is given to developing effective collaborative interventions which look to tackle any issues in the short term, whilst considering how the issue can be prevented from continuing into the future.

Integration

Considering how the PSB well-being objectives may impact upon each of the well-being goals, on their other objectives, or on the objectives of other public bodies.

Integration in this assessment process

This Well-Being Assessment has been developed to ensure it considers, in the first instance, the challenges and opportunities that present themselves in the economic, social, cultural and environmental chapters. We have also started

the process to explore connections between all four well-being chapters.

Specific examples of our integrated approach include:

- The PSB, in its development sessions in July 2016, recognised the need to develop objectives which will have a positive effect on a number of key issues.
- The Partnership workshop of the PSB Strategic Support Group on carrying out the prioritisation process to support the PSB to develop indicative priorities for well-being planning (March 2017) considered how each of the issues identified from the assessment was inter-connected to other identified issues.
- Each of the sections in the four well-being chapters contains information on how that specific section relates to, or is integrated into other sections identified in the assessment.
- Each of the sections in the four well-being chapters contains information on how that specific section relates to the seven national well-being goals.

Moving forward with the well-being plan

The approach of identifying inter-connectivity and linkages between issues will be further developed during the next stage of response analysis. Full application of the logic mapping process will help identify the potential multiple impacts of any interventions considered as part of the PSB setting its well-being objectives.

Long Term

The importance of balancing short-term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to also meet long-term needs.

Long Term in this assessment process

This assessment has, where data is available, examined longer term trends affecting well-being both in Wales and Blaenau Gwent and how this will affect the well-being of its people and communities. Specific examples of the integrated approach include:

- The projection of existing trends to consider the likely future trend, with examples being projecting economic patterns of employment and impact of an ageing population.
- This assessment includes information on Wales' key future trends, taken from national reports, and consideration of what the key trends would mean for Blaenau Gwent.
- The Partnership workshop of the PSB Strategic Support Group on carrying out the prioritisation process to support the PSB to develop indicative priorities for well-being planning (March 2017) considered the long term effect of the identified issues.
- Each of the sections in the four well-being chapters contains information on how that specific section considers the long-term, thinking about the known, potential or likely impact on well-being for the issues identified. It looks to identify short, medium and long term impacts.

Moving forward with the well-being plan

The approach has identified the need for further work to be considered to identify future trends. This includes considering long term patterns to be integrated into the next stage of well-being planning through the response analysis, and also working with regional partners to consider how technology changes will affect the way public services are delivered.

Involvement

The importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the well-being goals, and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area which the body serves.

Involvement in this assessment process

The drafting of this Well-Being Assessment has placed involvement at its core. Public engagement and involvement has been fundamental to the development of this assessment, with a focus on making participation as easy as possible to encourage people to share their views. Furthermore, the professional planning process has provided significant opportunities to ensure that stakeholders from partner organisations and interested parties have had significant opportunities to be involved in shaping the development of the assessment. Specific examples of the involvement in this assessment include:

- The PSB in July 2016 highlighted the importance of public engagement in the process of developing a well-being assessment and plan and agreed a two year programme of engagement called the 'Blaenau Gwent We Want'.
- The PSB and supporting partnership have come together throughout 2016/17 in a number of workshops and partnership meetings to ensure

the assessment was taken forward in a collaborative way to secure their knowledge and insight.

- Engagement of over 1,000 local residents in the first phase of the Blaenau Gwent We Want programme, and over 600 people and stakeholders in the second phase of formal consultation.
- Striving to engage with people from a variety of groups to ensure there is wide representation from the community. Furthermore, the engagement group held a workshop to identify any existing gaps and develop solutions to ensure the seldom heard groups get the opportunity to participate.
- Responding to the formal consultation process, using the feedback from all participants including statutory consultee, to significantly strengthen this final assessment.

Moving forward with the well-being plan

Engaging and involving people will continue to be a fundamental element of the next planning process, as recognised by the PSB in agreeing a two-year programme of engagement. The partnership engagement group will continue to provide collaborative opportunities for engagement to support the focused response analysis.



3. Blaenau Gwent People and Places

3.1 Blaenau Gwent as an area

Blaenau Gwent is a place of heritage and dramatic change, with a sense of its past but its eyes firmly on the future. The area is relatively small geographically, being at most 15 miles north to south, and 8 miles east to west. Blaenau Gwent is defined physically by high hillsides dividing the three main valleys. These valleys are home to towns and villages which seem to merge together into one. However, each community proudly maintains its own character and traditions.

Although the towns give the county borough a busy, urban feel, Blaenau Gwent is actually a largely rural area. Wherever you are, beautiful countryside is never far away. Figure BG01 below looks to give a visual representation of Blaenau Gwent, highlighting some of our distinctive local features.

Figure BG01: Map of Blaenau Gwent



A short history of our area

Before the early 1800s, the area that is now Blaenau Gwent was a quiet, rural area dominated by tiny villages and farmland. Welsh was the only language, and English was little understood.

The start of the industrial revolution in Great Britain was significant to the area, as people looked to take advantage of the



plentiful supply of resources that could be found. In the first instance this took the form of ironworks, quickly followed by coal mining and steel making.

As the industries grew, so did the demand for labour and the population of Blaenau Gwent grew remarkably. Between the early 19th and early 20th century the population rose from around 1,200 to well over 120,000.

As our communities thrived, so did the need for services required to deal with this social and cultural explosion, examples being education, health, shops and leisure opportunities. This led to the growth of a network of communities and neighbourhoods, which make up the towns and neighbourhoods that we know today.

The people of Blaenau Gwent had a strong work and community ethic, and this was shown by them campaigning together to make improvements to their quality of life. Examples of this include the first ever board of health set up in England and Wales, campaigning for electoral reform, abolishing company-run shops, and the reduction in working hours, many of which influence the way people live their lives today.

Blaenau Gwent has a rich heritage which is reflected in our monuments, buildings, landscapes and people.

Present day Blaenau Gwent

The period from the late 1980s has seen the formation of Blaenau Gwent as it is known today. It became a county borough council in 1996 following local government reorganisation, changing from a district of Gwent County.

In the last 20 years the people of Blaenau Gwent have faced many challenges, with the closure of all the coal mines in the late 1980s, and the Ebbw Vale Steelworks in 2002 leading to many job losses.

In an attempt to reduce the effect of this, significant effort has been put into changing the focus of our economy towards the manufacturing and services industry. However, over the period there has been an overall loss of jobs and many of our young people and families have had to move away in search of further education and employment. This is highlighted by a 5% reduction in the population between 1991 and 2011. This is in contrast to Wales overall where there has been a 4% increase. Currently, 49% of Blaenau Gwent working residents have to commute outside the borough to work and commuting distance has increased by more than any local authority in Wales.

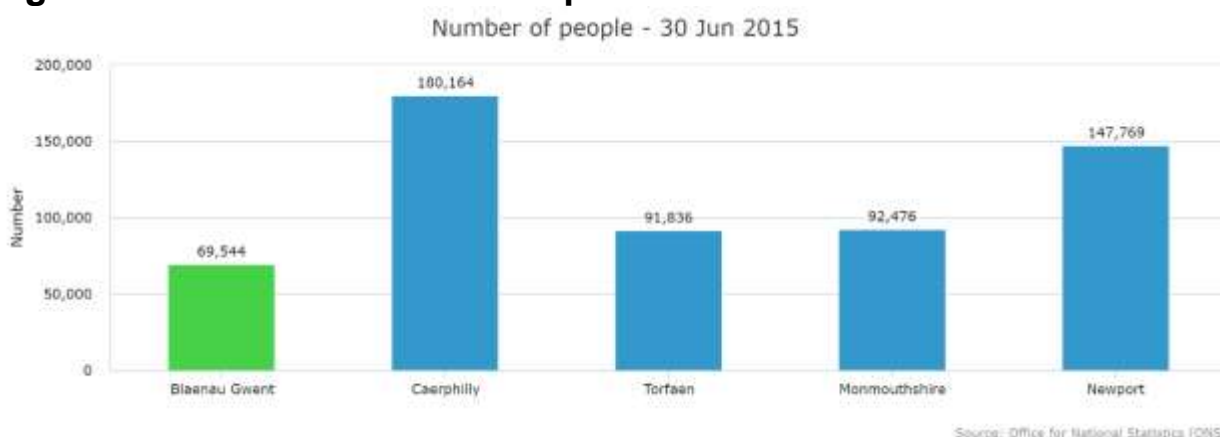
We cannot underestimate the effect of these issues. Even so, in the last 20 years the area has seen significant structural and environment improvement, following major levels of capital investment, and the greening of our valleys as nature recovers from the long-term scarring caused through our historical industries.

Blaenau Gwent population

Understanding the population of an area and how this might change can provide an insight into both the assets and challenges that are likely to exist or arise, and the types of policies and initiatives that might be most appropriate.

In 2015 the population of Blaenau Gwent was 69,544. Figure BG02 shows the mid-year estimate of the number of people usually resident across the Gwent local authorities in 2015. As can be seen Blaenau Gwent is the smallest local authority area in Gwent.

Figure BG02: Blaenau Gwent Population



Population Change

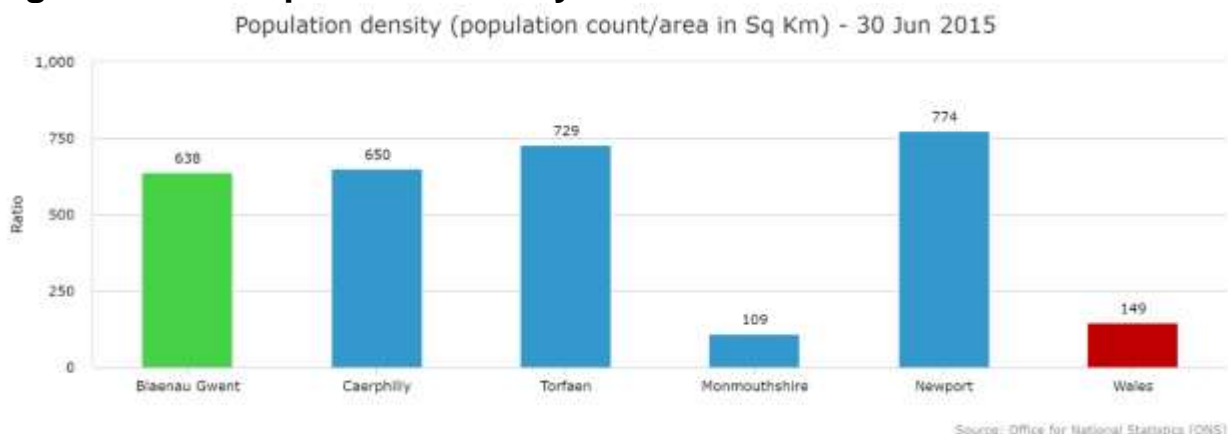
Historically, the overall population in Blaenau Gwent has fallen since it peaked in 1921. The 1921 Census showed a population over 125,000 people lived in the Blaenau Gwent Area, significantly above the current population.

More recently the rate of decline has been more stable, falling by just 3.4% or 2,437 people in the 20 year period between the 1991 Census (72,251) and Census 2011 (69,814). The rate of decline in the ten year period between 2001 and 2011 was the lowest rate of decline in population over a ten year period since 1921.

Population Density

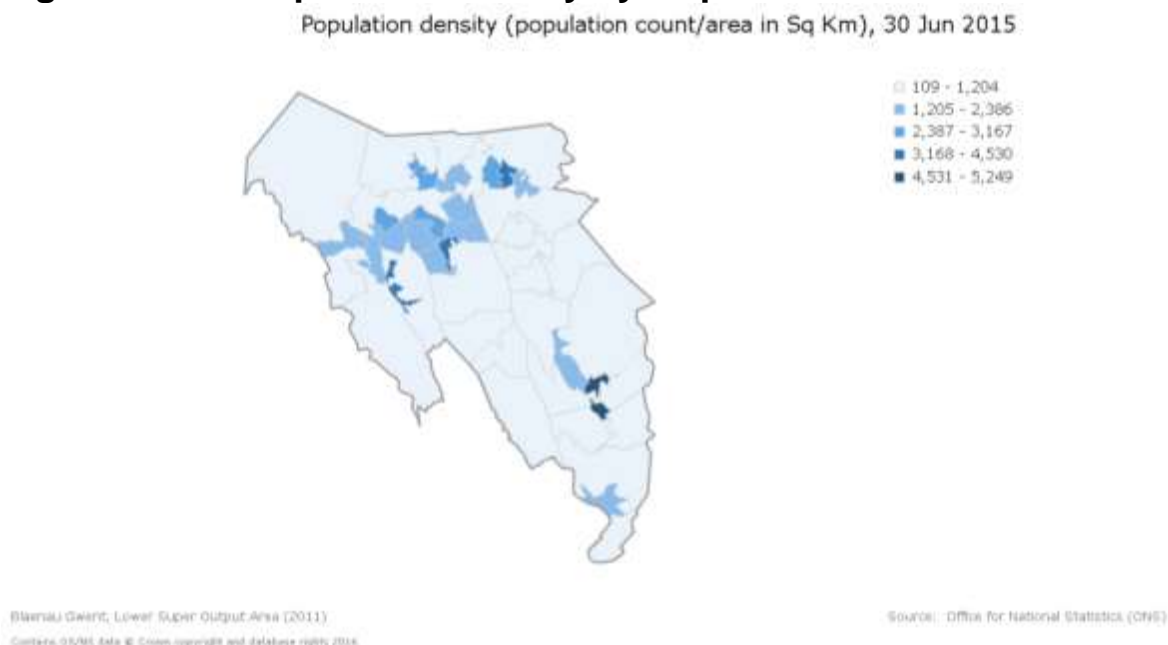
Figure BG03 below shows the population density across the Gwent region in 2015. The population density in Blaenau Gwent was 638 people per square kilometre, compared with 149 per square kilometre for Wales. Blaenau Gwent's population density is similar to neighbouring areas, all of which are significantly above the Welsh average.

Figure BG03: Population Density



Map BG04 shows the population density of each of the 47 lower super output areas (LSOA) in Blaenau Gwent. The darker areas of the map represent those areas with a higher population density. Further analysis shows some area's population density levels to be similar to those in city areas.

Figure BG04: Population Density by Map



Population by Gender

As is the case across Wales and the UK, the 2015 mid-year estimates show that there are slightly more females (51%) than males (49%) in Blaenau Gwent. There is also little difference from the Welsh average when considering gender split across each of the key age bands, varying by no more than 2%.

Population by Age

Blaenau Gwent, like the majority of places in the UK, has an overall population which is ageing. Generally, this is because less people are being born than before, and those people that are alive are living longer. The information below shows key trends in population by three distinct age groups (0-15, 16 to 64 and 65 and over):

- 17.5% of the population of Blaenau Gwent were aged 0 - 15 years in 2015, a slightly lower proportion than the 17.9% seen for Wales.
- The proportion of the people aged 0-15 is decreasing (2011, 17.9%).
- 63.1% of the population were aged 16 - 64 years in Blaenau Gwent in 2015, which was the highest proportion of all the local authority areas in the Gwent region and above the Wales rate which was 61.9%.
- The proportion of the people aged 16-64 is decreasing (2011, 64.2%).
- 19.5% of the population were aged 65 years or over in the (Blaenau Gwent) Gwent region on 30 June 2015. This compares with 20.2% for Wales.
- The proportion of the people aged 65 and over is increasing significantly (2011, 17.9%).

Disability

The 2011 Census showed that 28% of all people who live within Blaenau Gwent stated they had a limiting long-term health problem or illnesses, where day-to-day activities were limited. This was higher than Wales overall (23%), and was the 2nd highest level in Wales (behind Neath Port Talbot with 28%).

More recent statistics from the Annual Population Survey (June 2016) shows that Blaenau Gwent continues to have significantly above average levels of disability with a total of 31.6% of working age people being defined as disabled (economically active core or work-limiting disabled) compared to 22.8% for Wales.

These comparatively high levels of disability in Blaenau Gwent leads to a high proportion of people claiming disability-related benefits, with 12.0% of working aged people in Blaenau Gwent claimed EAS or Incapacity Benefit, compared to 8.4% across Wales (May 2016).

Race

The 2011 Census statistics showed Blaenau Gwent's Black and Ethnic Minority population to be just under 1,900. This equates to 2.6% of the total population and well below the Welsh average of 6.7%. In 2001 the percentage of people in Blaenau Gwent from minority ethnic groups was 1.8%, approximately 1,300 people, which shows a notable increase from 2001 to 2011. Even so, Blaenau Gwent still has one of the lowest levels of people from minority ethnic groups in England and Wales.

Religion and Belief

The 2011 Census showed that half of people in Blaenau Gwent stated their religion to be Christian (50%), below the Welsh average of 59%. This has shown a notable decrease since the 2001 Census, with respective levels of 64% and 71%

Just over 1% of people in Blaenau Gwent stated that they were of another religion such as Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim, Jewish and Sikh.

Just over 41% of the Blaenau Gwent population stated they have no religion, above the Welsh average of 37%. This is a notable increase compared to 2001, with respective levels of 25% and 19%.

A further 8% of people in Blaenau Gwent did not state their religion.

Sexual Orientation

Statistics on sexual orientation for Blaenau Gwent are not available with any level of accuracy. However, the Integrated Household Survey includes data on sexual identity for Wales on a calendar year basis. In 2014 this survey showed that in Wales, 93.9% of people identified as heterosexual or straight, 1.5% as gay/lesbian or bisexual, and 0.4% as 'other' while 1.1% of people did not answer this question (1.1% simply did not respond and 3.0% did not know or refused to answer the question, compared to 1.8% and 2.9% respectively in 2013). The results are similar to the results for the UK as a whole, though the non-response rate for Wales was lower than for the UK.

Armed Forces Community

Information available from the Royal British Legion estimated that the adult ex-Service community (veterans and adult dependents) in Wales to be a population of approximately 365,000, making up around 12% of the adult population. Due to an ageing population, by 2020 this population will fall to around 300,000 and subsequently to around 252,000 by 2025.

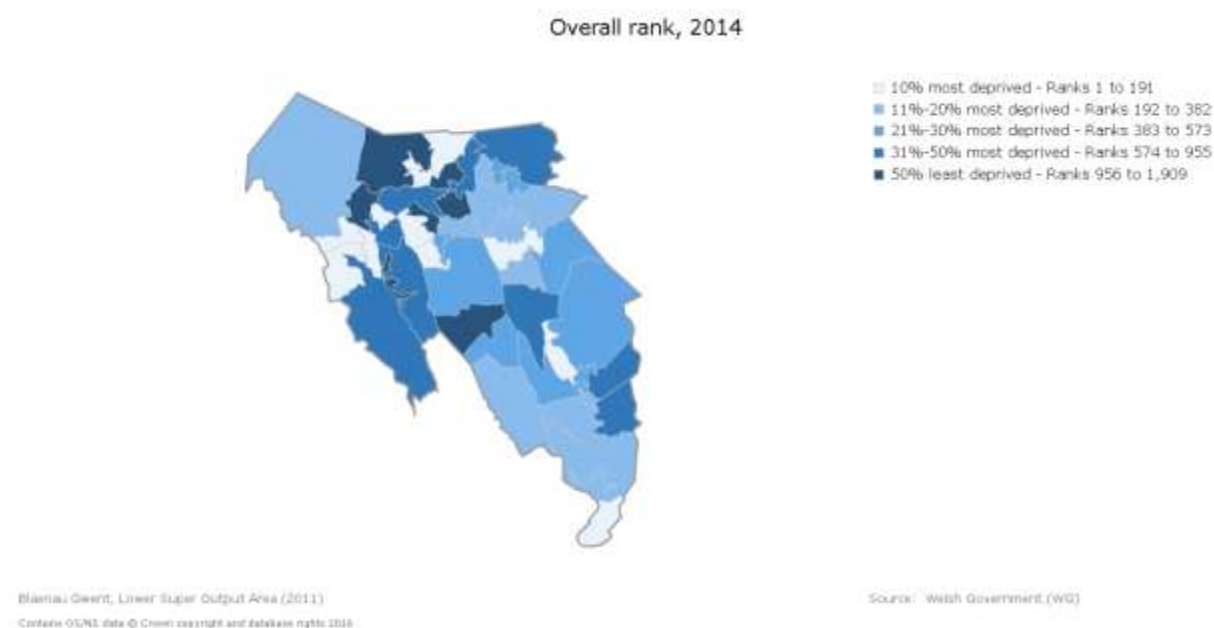
In Blaenau Gwent, the Ministry of Defence shows 204 people in receipt of the Armed Forces Pension Scheme and 155 people in receipt of War Disablement Pension (including War Widow and Widowers).

Deprivation in Blaenau Gwent

Figure BG05 shows the overall rank of the 2014 Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) which captures the extent of deprivation relating to a number of factors and focuses on the proportion of residents in each lower super output area (LSOA) and their level of deprivation.

The overall index provides a single figure that represents the combination of the eight domains of deprivation within the WIMD. The eight domains are: income; employment; health; education, skills and training; geographical access to services; housing; physical environment; and community safety. The darker areas of the map represent those areas with a higher percentage of the population in deprivation.

Figure BG05: Blaenau Gwent Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2014



Blaenau Gwent is the area in Wales with the highest percentage of its LSOAs areas in the most deprived 10% (23.4%).

When considering the individual domains for the area, Blaenau Gwent had the highest percentage of LSOAs in the most deprived 10% in Wales, for income (19.1%), education (27.7%), and community safety (23.4%).

3.2 What our people feel is special about Blaenau Gwent

One of the key questions asked of people during the first phase of “The Blaenau Gwent We Want” was what people think is special about Blaenau Gwent. This question was asked to identify what people thought were the areas strengths and assets. The top five themes are outlined below:



3.2.1. Our Environment

Over one-third of people responding to this question (36%) identified our natural environment as what is special about the area. Some of the key assets identified were Bryn Bach Park, Bedwellty Park, Sirhowy Woodlands Festival Park, Silent Valley Nature Reserve, Six Bells Nature Reserve, and Cwmtillery Lakes.

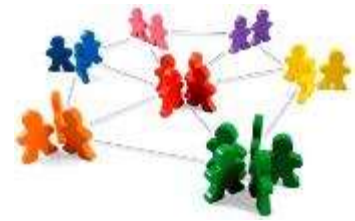
Also, identified were the areas proximity to Brecon Beacons National park, opportunities for walking, and also the areas general landscape for example, mountains and hillsides, and its accessibility for local people.

Children and Young People value our Environment

Our environment was recognised as special by the Children’s Grand Council. The Blaenau Gwent Children’s Grand Council were asked to identify what they felt was special about our area. The Environment was one of the key features identified with specific comments relating to our Landscapes (40 references), our Parks (26 references) and our Wildlife (6 references).

3.2.2. Our Community

The second most popular theme identified as to 'what is special about our area' was our communities and the people that live within them.



People identified the areas community spirit as a particular asset, noting the area had close knit communities, which help each other out.

Also recognised was volunteering in the area, availability of community groups for people to attend, and that people in the area are welcoming and engaging and want to help others.

The quote below is from a participant at our joint 50+ Network and Access for All Equality Forum during 'The Blaenau Gwent We Want':

"The biggest strength of our community is and always has been 'the people'. It is the trials and tribulations that have cemented that sense of community and hopefully that sense of 'us' will always endure."



3.2.3. Education and Skills

The third most popular theme recognised by people (7%) was education and skills. This was particularly noticeably from children and young people participating through the Blaenau Gwent Children's Grand Council, and Youth Forum.

Also, noted by a few people was the new Blaenau Gwent Learning Zone that Coleg Gwent operate at The Works site in Ebbw Vale.

3.2.4. Our Heritage

Over 5% of people identified our heritage as a key theme when outlining what they felt was special about our area. Local historical monuments and attractions mentioned included Tredegar Town Clock, Bedwellty House and Park and the Six Bells Guardian Miners' Memorial.

3.2.5. Social and Cultural Activities

The fifth most popular theme for people when considering what was special about the area was social and cultural activities. Specifics mentioned by people were the local cinema, local festivals, pubs, community centres, youth service events, theatres, and local (activity) clubs.

3.2.6 Other 'Special' things in Blaenau Gwent

As well as the broad categories identified above, a number of specific things were identified as special to the area, these include:

- Ysbyty Aneurin Bevan Local General Hospital
- Garden Festival in Ebbw Vale
- Railway service to Ebbw Vale
- Cycle path network in Blaenau Gwent
- Leisure Centres across the area
- Shops
- Regeneration to The Works
- Access to Cardiff
- Churches
- Libraries across area

3.3 Blaenau Gwent People's Perception of Well-Being

In March 2017, a national report was published on [measuring well-being inequality in Britain](#). The report was produced by the 'What Works Centre for Wellbeing and the Economic and Social Research Council', and uses data from the Office of National Statistics (ONS). The report is focused on analysing four key questions asked as part of the Annual Population Survey, allowing consistent data to be analysed on well-being inequality for a large number of local authority areas in the UK. These are:

1. Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?
2. Overall, to what extent do you feel the things you do in your life are worthwhile?
3. Overall, how happy did you feel yesterday?
4. Overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday?

Why does well-being inequality matter?

This report outlines the importance of considering well-being inequality, recognising that within every area there are people with different opinions on their personal well-being. Measuring the well-being of an area solely on an average score will not provide a true picture of what living in an area may be like for **all people** living in the area.

Figure BG06 below taken from the report exemplifies this. The average well-being score for authority A and B is the same. However, authority B has a bigger difference (more inequality) in its well-being score than authority A.

Figure BG06: Explaining Well-being Inequality



Source: [Measuring well-being inequality in Britain](#)

Why is this research important for Blaenau Gwent?

The report outlines that when considering well-being inequality the Blaenau Gwent area was measured as the **most unequal** of all the areas measured as part of the research. What this tells us is that like the example noted in the graphic above, Blaenau Gwent has the biggest distinction in polarised views of personal well-being.

Furthermore, analysis of the overall trend by time shows that the well-being inequality in Blaenau Gwent has increased between 2012/13 and the 2014/15 (the most recent).

The report also considers well-being inequality by different groups in society and shows that levels of education can be correlated to well-being inequality. Blaenau Gwent was noted as the area which saw respondents with lower levels of education more likely to witness well-being deficits.

It is not all doom and gloom

This does not mean that Blaenau Gwent has the lowest well-being score of all the local authority areas. In fact, in the 2012 to 2015 analysis (the most recent) Blaenau Gwent had an average well-being score of 7.38 which ranked it just inside the bottom 50 areas, and was similar to other areas within the Gwent footprint such as Newport (7.38), Torfaen (7.39) Caerphilly (7.40), and Monmouthshire (7.67).

What does this research tell us about people living in the area?

The findings of the report show that within the area there is significant inequality in the way that people feel about their lives and their well-being. This presents the challenge of what can be done to make people feel more satisfied with their lives. However, given that the overall well-being score is in-line with neighbouring areas, there is the opportunity to tackle this inequality by supporting the least happy to live a happy and fulfilling life.

3.4 Blaenau Gwent in Wales

Geographically, Blaenau Gwent is a relatively small part of Wales with just over 2% of the overall population living on less than 0.5% of the land.

At the Heart of 'The Valleys'

Blaenau Gwent is a fundamental part of 'The Welsh Valleys' or 'The Valleys' which run from Carmarthenshire in the West to Monmouthshire in the East. This area has a distinctive character which has been shaped by a strong industrial heritage, however each individual valley is unique and offers a variety of opportunities.



Source: *Perception of Blaenau Gwent from participant at Brynmawr Town Event, Blaenau Gwent We Want*

The heritage and the natural beauty of our landscapes, which is frequently under-valued by local people, has in recent years seen the area become a draw for tourism, and is attractively promoted by Visit Wales as an area perfect for walking and cycling .

The perception of 'The Valleys' is not always taken with such positivity. This is particularly the case for Blaenau Gwent where it has been used as an 'indicator town' for deprivation and poverty. The catastrophic effects of the loss of the economic heartbeat of the area – the coal and steel industries – has led to a perception of abject poverty and deprivation.

Well Connected

Blaenau Gwent's positioning in South Wales means that it is strategically connected to the majority of important places and areas, attractions and opportunities. The area is no more than an hour journey from Cardiff, the nation's capital, and 30 minutes from the regional significant city of Newport.

The Ebbw Valley Railway was restored in early 2008, following a gap of almost 50 years for a passenger service to the area. This service, which was much welcomed and anticipated by local people, continues to provide a key link for many people in Blaenau Gwent to improve their economic and social well-being. The actual number of passengers far exceeded expectations, and there continues to be support for improving the service by extending the service to Abertillery from Llanhilleth, and increasing the frequency of services offered.

The area is also well-connected to its neighbouring region, which includes the significant towns of Merthyr Tydfil and Abergavenny, both popular for local people in Blaenau Gwent. The A465 Heads of the Valleys road makes these connections for local people easy, as well as offering strategic employment opportunities as the road is recognised by the Welsh Government as a key corridor and international gateway for the south Wales economy.

Air travel from Blaenau Gwent is via the Cardiff International Airport, an hour from the area, accessible via road, and public transport. The area is also well-positioned to Bristol International Airport (1 hour 20 minutes by car) and Birmingham International Airport (1 hour 45 minutes by car).

Gateway to Tourism and Heritage

Blaenau Gwent is well positioned to make the most of a number of tourism opportunities offered in neighbouring areas.

The Brecon Beacons, the internationally significant national park, runs adjacent to the northern boundary of the Blaenau Gwent area, with a small part of the park being within the north-eastern corner of the upper Ebbw Fach valley neighbourhood area, in Brynmawr. The national park is easily accessible from the area via the B4560, which starts at the northern boundary of the Ebbw Fawr Valley neighbourhood area via Garnlydan.

This famous road cuts through the Llangynidr and Llangattock moorland and offers spectacular views of the Brecon Beacons National Wales for motorists, cyclists and walkers – the area is a popular trip for local people.

The B4560, which starts in Blaenau Gwent is identified by the world renowned 'National Geographic' as one of the 'Top 10 Drivers' Drives in the world', alongside famous routes such as Highway 89 in America, the Denali Highway in Alaska and Ruta 40 in Argentina.

The Big Pit National Coal Museum is a short 10 minute drive from Brynmawr in the Upper Ebbw Fach valley neighbourhood area. The museum is focused on preserving the areas industrial heritage, educating current generations about the coal mining industry. Big Pit is part of a World Heritage Site recognised by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).

The South Wales Valleys and neighbouring Brecon Beacons National Park, is increasingly become recognised as a world class venue for Mountain Biking, with formalised mountain bike trails being offered at Bike Park Wales in Merthyr Tydfil and Mountain Bike Wales in Cwmcarn, Caerphilly.

Public Service Footprints

The area of Blaenau Gwent was formed as a district of Gwent in 1974, merging a variety of urban district areas of the former Monmouthshire County. The current local authority area was constituted as a unitary authority following local government reorganisation in 1996. The area shares its name with the parliamentary and assembly constituencies, with Nick Smith MP representing in Westminster (Labour) and Alun Davies representing at the Senedd in Cardiff (Labour).

The Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council operates as a unitary authority offering the local government services such as education, social services, environmental services and 'highways'.

A range of public services are provided on a regional 'Gwent' footprint with key examples being health services being provided by Aneurin Bevan University Health Board and police and crime services being provided by Gwent Police.

Other public services are provided on other 'regional' or national footprints. For example, the South Wales Fire and Rescue Service (covering 10 local authority areas in Wales), and Wales Ambulance Services NHS Trust, National Probation Service Wales, Wales Community Rehabilitation Company, and Natural Resources Wales (all of which cover all 22 local authorities in Wales).

The way public services are organised and delivered in Wales, continues to be an on-going topic for consideration, particularly as some of the key challenges come into focus relating to providing public services as austerity measures affect public finances.

Some public service and third sector organisation operate on alternative footprints, such Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations (GAVO) - who cover four of the five local authority areas, with the exception of Torfaen. Furthermore, as a consequence of collaborative agreements a number of local

government services are provided on sub-regional (Gwent) or bespoke administrative footprints in-line with demand.

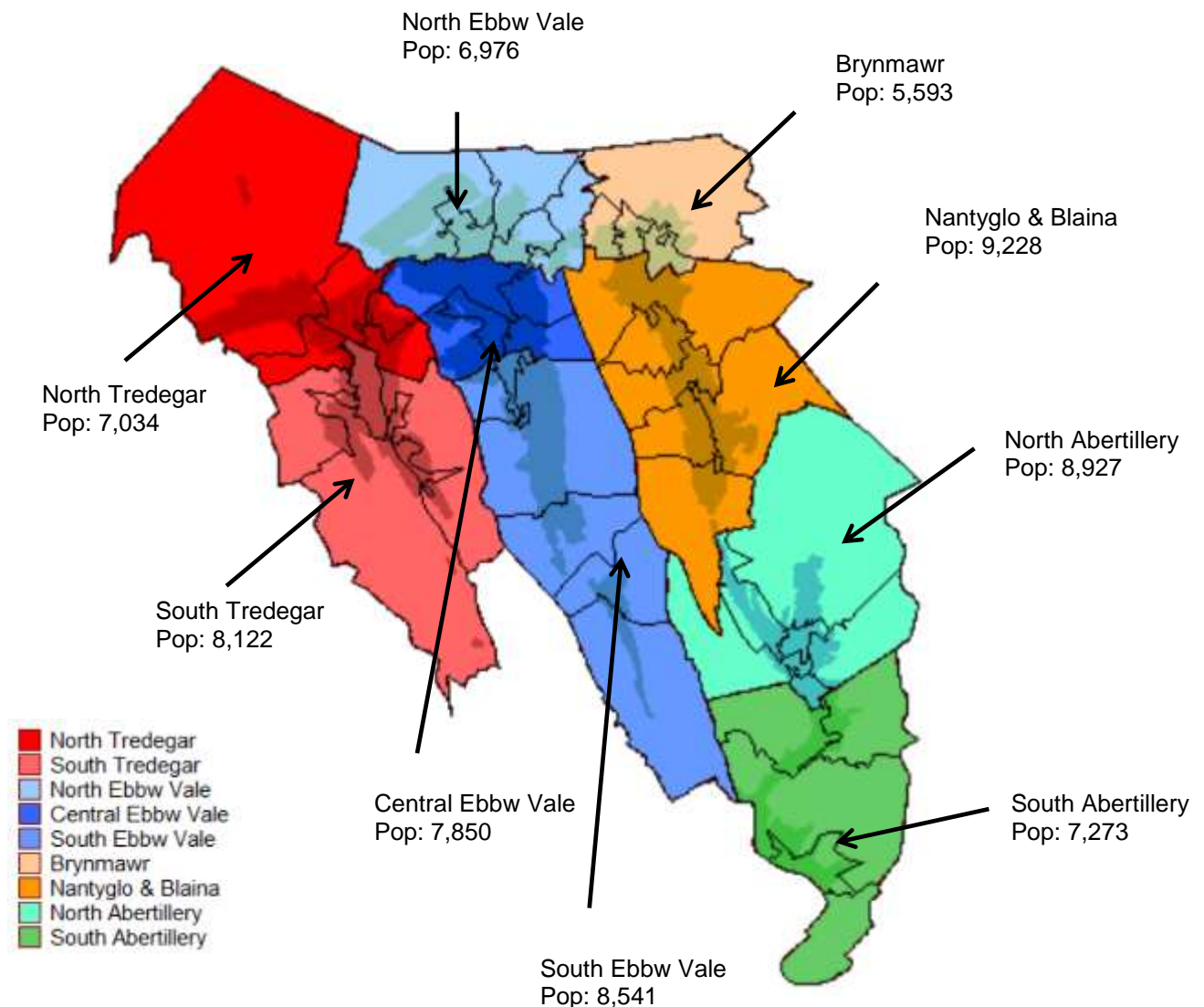
Continuing Reforming of Public Services

Mark Drakeford released a White Paper on 31 January 2017 for consultation, setting out the intentions for how 22 current councils in Wales will deliver some of their services together to strengthen services and meet future challenges. The paper outlines a series of proposals for mandatory regional working of a range of services, addressing workforce issues and implementation of electoral reform.

3.5 Neighbourhood Areas in Blaenau Gwent

This assessment is focused around four neighbourhood areas which align to our valleys, towns and neighbourhoods. Figure BG07 below summarises the four areas, with Sirhowy coloured red, Ebbw Fawr coloured blue, North Ebbw Fach coloured orange, and South Ebbw Fach coloured green. Furthermore, the map shows the nine Middle Super Output Areas (MSOAs) [as outlined in the key] within these areas, and key population information. The darker shading on the map shows the areas of urban settlements.

Figure BG07: Neighbourhood Areas in Blaenau Gwent



Our Neighbourhood Geography



These are based on our valleys:

- **Sirhowy** containing the main town of Tredegar, its outlining neighbourhoods and the surrounding villages and settlements such as Trefil and Bedwellty Pits.
- **Ebbw Fawr** containing the main town of Ebbw Vale, its outlining neighbourhoods and surrounding villages and settlements such as Cwm.
- **Upper Ebbw Fach** containing the three towns and settlements of Brynmawr, Nantyglo and Blaina and their outlining neighbourhoods.
- **Lower Ebbw Fach** containing the main town of Abertillery, its outlining neighbourhoods and the surrounding villages and settlements such as Aberbeeg, Llanhilleth, Brynhithel and Swffryd.

Sirhowy Valley



The Sirhowy Valley neighbourhood area is named after the main river that cuts through the valley. The area contains the main town of **Tredeggar**, and includes all of Tredeggar's Northern neighbourhoods such as Waundeg, Golwg y Mynydd, Sirhowy, Dukestown, and Scwrfa (North Tredeggar MSOA), and southern neighbourhoods such as Ashvale, Cefn Golau, Georgetown, and Peacehaven (South Tredeggar MSOA).

The area also includes the surrounding villages and settlements of Trefil, Tafarnaubach and Princetown (North Tredeggar MSOA), and Troedrhiwgair, Bedwellty Pits, and Pochin (South Tredeggar MSOA).

The neighbourhood area includes the three local authority electoral wards of Sirhowy, Tredeggar Central and West and Georgetown which are represented by nine ward members/councillors (of the 42 elected members of Blaenau Gwent). The area also has Tredeggar Town Council which has 18 Councillors.

The areas geography is typical of the Blaenau Gwent area and the urban settlements are mainly clustered in the base of the valley and surrounding hillsides. The north of the valley opens to moorland where its northern edge borders the Brecon Beacons National Park. The area has a number of natural landscapes that benefit the communities which include recognised areas such as Bryn Bach Park and Bedwellty House and Park. As well as these two parks there are also a number of open natural landscapes such as Trefil Moorland, Sirhowy Woodlands, St James reservoir, and Bedwellty Pits.

The area has a number of important heritage features which link strongly to the areas industrial past. Key heritage features in the area include the Town Clock, Bedwellty House and Park, Tredeggar and Sirhowy Ironworks, Cefn

Golau Cholera Cemetery, the Chartist Caves, and the Bedwellty Pits Engine.

The area is connected to neighbouring areas in the north by the A465 Heads of the Valleys Road, which has been recently upgraded to a dual carriageway. The A4048 runs north to south through the valley, as a town bypass, connecting in the south to Blackwood in neighbouring Caerphilly.

The town does not have a direct train connection. However, there is bus provision that connects the town to Rhymney train station in neighbouring Caerphilly, (which connects to Cardiff). Also, in neighbouring Ebbw Vale, there are two train stations which connect to Newport (Pye Corner) and Cardiff. The main bus provision is the X40 which connects the town and surrounding neighbourhoods to Merthyr Tydfil (and onto Cardiff) and Ebbw Vale (and onto Abergavenny, and Hereford in England).

The town centre of Tredegar supports the neighbourhood area and offers a range of shopping and retail facilities. The 2016 Town Centre survey for the Local Development Plan shows that within the town boundary there are 155 units, with a vacancy rate of 18%. The town also includes the local library.

There are a number of industrial estates within the area, which provide opportunities for employment. These include Tafarnaubach Industrial Estate, Crown Business Park, Ashvale Industrial Estate, and Tredegar Business Park.

In terms of education the area is served by Tredegar Comprehensive School which is an English medium mixed 11 to 16 school with approximately 650 pupils (2016), and five primary schools of Bryn Bach, Deighton, Glanhowy, St Joseph's Roman Catholic, and Georgetown. Formal further education opportunities are offered via the Coleg Gwent Ebbw Vale Learning Zone in neighbouring Ebbw Vale. The Comprehensive School site also supports the Tredegar Leisure Centre and associated sports pitches.

Five out of ten LSOA's (Lower Super Output Area's) that make up the Sirhowy area are eligible for Flying Start services (Sirhowy 1, Sirhowy 4, Tredegar

Central and West 2,3 and 4). The families within these areas are provided with opportunities of free local childcare for 2-3 year olds; parenting support; speech, language and communication support and an enhanced Health Visiting service. Flying Start hubs are situated in Sirhowy and Cefn Golau. The area is also served by the Communities First programme.

The population of the Sirhowy area is 15,156, which is 22% of the population of the Blaenau Gwent area. The area has slightly fewer people aged 0-15 years than in Blaenau Gwent overall. Tredegar North has comparatively lower numbers of people aged 16 to 64, and above average numbers of people age 65 and over.

The following provide key features from the demographic profile for the neighbourhood area from the Census 2011:



- Mean age of the population 41.1 years, above the Welsh average of 40.6 years.
- 98.3% of population are white, similar to that witnessed for the Blaenau Gwent area, which is slightly above the rate noted for Wales overall. The largest ethnic minority groups are mixed/multiple ethnic groups (0.7%) and Asian or Asian British (0.5%).
- Almost three-quarters of residents identify themselves as Welsh only (73.3%), similar to that witnessed for the Blaenau Gwent area (72.4%). This is significantly above the rate noted for Wales overall (57.5%).
- Knowledge of Welsh is relatively low, which 12.4% indicating knowledge of Welsh, which is similar to that witnessed for the Blaenau Gwent area (11.5%). This is significantly below the rate noted for Wales overall (26.7%).
- Car ownership in the area is below that of the overall Wales level with almost one-third of population (30%) not having access to a car or van (Wales 22.9%).

- Almost three-quarters of people in the area felt their health was good (70.9%), similar to Blaenau Gwent overall (72.5%), but significantly below that witnessed for Wales (77.7%).
- In terms of housing, a significantly majority are terraced (45%), this is below the rate for Blaenau Gwent overall (52.2%), but significantly above the rate of terraced housing for Wales overall (28%).
- Owner occupancy rates in the area at 60.9% are below the Wales rates at 67.7% and as a consequence an above average proportion rent their housing
- Economic activity rates for the area are 59.9%, which is slightly below the rate witnessed for Blaenau Gwent (62.1%) and Wales overall (65.7%). Higher levels of inactivity can be link to above average levels of people who are retired (17.9% compared to 16.1% for Wales overall), and people who are permanently sick or disabled (11.0% compared to 6.3% for Wales overall).
- The area has considerably fewer people qualified to at least degree level (15.1%) than witnessed across Wales overall (24.5%), and considerably more people with no qualification (38.5%) than witnessed across Wales overall (25.9%).

Further details can be found in the [Census 2011 Statistics Overview for the Sirhowy Valley](#).

Well-being Engagement in Sirhowy

Below is a summary of key feedback associated to the Sirhowy neighbourhood area from The 'Blaenau Gwent We Want' engagement programme.

Identified as 'Special things' in the Sirhowy area

- Bryn Bach Park
- St James Woodland
- Bedwellty House and Park
- Sirhowy Woodland
- Tredegar Town Clock
- Kids R Us

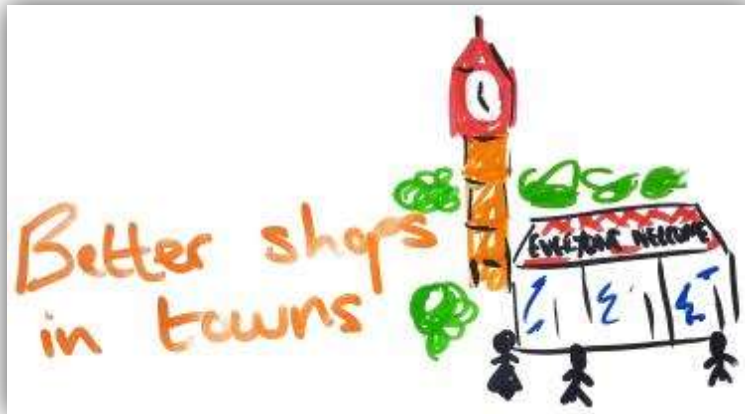
Identified as opportunities for 'Making Sirhowy area a better place'

- Improving roads and transport infrastructure with specific examples being 'more cycle paths' and 'improved public transport for Tredegar'.
- Making the area safer, with specific examples being 'reducing speeding', 'cracking down anti-social behaviour', and 'preventing substance misuse'.
- Better shop opportunities in the town
- Access to employment opportunities
- Cleaning environment, with examples being 'littering', 'responsible dog ownership', and 'introducing community gardens and adopted land'.
- Making recycling easier for families that want to recycle
- More things for people to do, examples being youth clubs, cinemas
- More community involvement and social participation
- Play facilities and sensory gardens

Identified as being able to 'Help to make Sirhowy area a better place'

- Raise awareness of social responsibilities
- Shop locally
- Be positive and respect our area
- Keep houses and gardens clean and tidy.
- Looking after our neighbours
- Embrace other cultures

Selection of relevant images from 'Blaenau Gwent We Want' process



Ebbw Fawr Valley



The neighbourhood area is named after the Ebbw Fawr river that cuts through the valley and joins the Ebbw Fach river at Aberbeeg. The area contains the main town of Ebbw Vale. It includes all of Ebbw Vale's northern neighbourhoods such as Rassau, Garnlydan and Beaufort (North Ebbw Vale MSOA), central neighbourhoods such as Glyncoed, Glanyrafon, Newchurch, Mountain Air, Willowtown, Pontygof, and Newtown (Central Ebbw Vale MSOA), and south neighbourhoods around the Ebbw Vale Town, Hilltop, and Briery Hill (South Ebbw Vale MSOA).

The area also includes surrounding villages and settlements such as Tyllwyn, Waunlwyd, Victoria, and Cwm (all of which are in South Ebbw Vale MSOA).

The neighbourhood area includes the six local authority electoral wards of Rassau, Beaufort, Badminton, Ebbw Vale North, Ebbw Vale South, and Cwm which are represented by 13 ward members/councillors (of the 42 elected members for Blaenau Gwent). Unlike all other areas of Blaenau Gwent, the area does not have any Town or Community Councils.

The areas geography is typical of the Blaenau Gwent area with the urban settlements mainly clustered in the base of the valley and surrounding hillsides. The north of the valley opens to the Llangynidr moorland where the northern edge borders the Brecon Beacons National Park.

The area has a number of natural landscapes and greenspace that benefit the

communities including three local nature reserves at Beaufort Hill Ponds and Woodland, Silent Valley and Garden City. As well as these there are plentiful open natural landscapes and other natural opportunities such as the Garden Festival Site, and Aberbeeg and Cwm Big woodlands. The area also hosts the Gwent Wildlife Trust Environmental Resource Centre, and the Furnace to Flowers project.

The area has a number of important heritage features which link strongly to its industrial past. It was home to the Ebbw Vale Steelworks and now hosts The Works site, which benefited from significant regeneration since the Steelworks closed in 2002. The area also hosted the National Garden Festival of Wales in 1992, which saw significant improvement in the natural landscape. The General Offices host the Gwent Archives and the Ebbw Vale Works Museum.

The area is connected in the north by the A465 Heads of the Valleys Road, which has been recently upgraded to a dual carriageway. The A4046 runs north to south through the valley connecting to the south to Newport.

The area has a direct train connection to Cardiff and Newport (Pye Corner). The train line has two train stations in the area at Ebbw Vale Town and Ebbw Vale Parkway. The main bus provision is the X40 which connects to Merthyr Tydfil (and onto Cardiff), and Brynmawr (and onto Abergavenny, and Hereford in England). The X22 connects Ebbw Vale to Cwmbran, and the X18 to Newport.

The town centre of Ebbw Vale supports the neighbourhood area and offers a broad range of shopping and retail facilities. The 2016 Town Centre survey for the Local Development Plan shows within the town boundary there are 117 units, with a vacancy rate of 13%. The town also includes the local library and Learning Action Centre. It also hosts two large out of town supermarkets, Tesco and Morrison's.

The area benefits from the Festival Park Outlet shopping and leisure facility in

Victoria which offers a range of retail and leisure opportunities.

There are a number of industrial estates which hosts a Wales Enterprise Zone focused on manufacturing. Supporting employment sites include Rassau, Bryn Serth, Waun-y-pound and Rhyd-y-Blew Industrial Sites. There are additional sites at Cwm Draw and Cwm Small Business Centre.

In terms of education the area is served by Ebbw Vale Learning Community which is a new purpose built 3 to 16 years school maintained by the local authority on The Works site. There are also six primary schools around the area which are Beaufort, Rhos y Fedwen, Glyncoed, Willowtown, All Saint's Roman Catholic and Cwm.

The area also hosts the Pen-y-Cwm Special School where all pupils' have statements of special educational needs for severe learning difficulties, profound and multiple learning difficulties or autistic spectrum disorders. Pupils attend from across Blaenau Gwent as well as from the neighbouring local authorities of Merthyr Tydfil, Torfaen, Monmouthshire and Newport.

The area also hosts the Canolfan yr Afon Pupil Referral Unit for the Blaenau Gwent area.

Four out of sixteen LSOA's (Lower Super Output Area's) that make up the Ebbw Fawr area are eligible for Flying Start services (Beaufort 2, Cwm 1, Ebbw Vale North 2 and Ebbw Vale South 1). The families within these areas are provided with opportunities of free local childcare for 2-3 year olds; parenting support; speech, language and communication support and an enhanced Health Visiting service. Flying Start hubs are situated in Garnlydan, Hilltop and Cwm, with an additional Flying Start registered Childcare Setting in Ebbw Vale. The area is also served by the Communities First programme.

Ysbyty Aneurin Bevan Hospital is located in the area, which is the new Local General Hospital for Blaenau Gwent. It has 96 in-patient beds, incorporates an adult mental health unit with outpatient, day care and an 11 bedded in-patient

facility. The hospital also has an out-patient department, a dedicated minor injuries unit, diagnostic support and a comprehensive therapies department.

The overall population of the Ebbw Fawr area is 23,367, which is 34% of the overall population of Blaenau Gwent.

The following provide key features from the demographic profile for the neighbourhood area from the Census 2011:



- Mean age of the population 40.3 years, slightly below the Welsh average of 40.6 years.
- 98.6% of population are white, similar to that witnessed for the Blaenau Gwent area, which is slightly above the rate noted for Wales overall. The largest ethnic minority groups are Asian or Asian British (0.6%) and mixed/multiple ethnic groups (0.4%).
- Almost three-quarters of residents identify themselves as Welsh only (72.4%), the same as that is witnessed for the Blaenau Gwent area. This is significantly above the rate noted for Wales overall (57.5%).
- Knowledge of Welsh is relatively low, with 11.4% indicating knowledge of Welsh, which virtually matches that witnessed for the Blaenau Gwent area (11.5%). This is significantly below the rate noted for Wales overall (26.7%).
- Car ownership in the area is below that of the overall Wales level with over one-quarter of the population (27%) not having access to a car or van (Wales 22.9%).
- Three-quarters of people in the area felt their health was good (74.4%), similar to Blaenau Gwent overall (72.5%), but notably below that witnessed for Wales (77.7%).
- In terms of housing, half are terraced (50%), this is below the rate for Blaenau Gwent overall (52.2%), but significantly above the rate of terraced housing for Wales overall (28%).

- Owner occupancy rates in the area at 63.5% are below the Wales rates at 67.7% and as a consequence an above average proportion rent their housing
- Economic activity rates for the area are 63.5, which is slightly above the rate witnessed for Blaenau Gwent (62.1%) but below Wales overall (65.7%). Higher levels of inactivity can be link to above average levels of people who are retired (17.1% compared to 16.1% for Wales overall), and people who are permanently sick or disabled (8.4% compared to 6.3% for Wales overall).
- The area has considerably fewer people qualified to at least degree level (16.3%) than witnessed across Wales overall (24.5%), and considerable more people with no qualification (33.4 %) than witnessed across Wales overall (25.9%).

Further details can be found in the [Census 2011 Statistics Overview for the Ebbw Fawr Valley](#)



Well-being Engagement in Ebbw Fawr

Below is a summary of key feedback associated to the Ebbw Fawr neighbourhood area from 'The Blaenau Gwent We Want' public engagement programme

Identified as 'Special things' in the Ebbw Fawr area

- Ebbw Vale Train Line
- The Works Site
- Blaenau Gwent Learning Zone
- Ysbyty Aneurin Bevan
- Beaufort Ponds and Woodlands
- General environment

Identified as opportunities for 'Making to make Ebbw Fawr area a better place'

- Cleaning environment, with examples being littering, cleaner streets and overgrown weeds
- Cleaner environment
- Access to local employment opportunities
- More accessible towns for people with disabilities
- Better services and amenities located in the town
- Better services for people with mental health difficulties e.g. autism
- Improvements in health services & Smoke Free Zones
- Attraction of inward investment for the Circuit of Wales & Enterprise Zone
- Improving educational attainment
- Better quality homes, with more choice
- More community involvement and social participation

Identified as being able to 'Help to make Ebbw Fawr area a better place'

- Community Clean up campaigns (Keep Britain Tidy)
- Promoting our assets for tourism
- Opportunity to have a voice
- Dog parks to prevent dog fouling

Selection of relevant images from 'Blaenau Gwent We Want' process



Upper Ebbw Fach Valley

The North Ebbw Fach neighbourhood area is named after the main river that starts at its northern boundary. The area contains the main town of Brynmawr and the settlements of Nantyglo and Blaina and their outlining neighbourhoods.



The neighbourhood area includes the three local authority electoral wards of Brynmawr, Nantyglo and Blaina which are represented by nine ward members/councillors (of the 42 elected members for the borough). The area has Brynmawr Town Council and Nantyglo and Blaina Town Council.

The geography of the area is slightly different to the rest of the Blaenau Gwent in that the urban settlement of Brynmawr is at the head of valley. However, the settlements of Nantyglo and Blaina are mainly clustered in the base of the valley and surrounding hillsides. The north of the valley opens to moorland where the northern edge borders the Brecon Beacons National Park.

The area has a number of natural landscapes that benefit the communities which include Welfare Park, Lakeside, Parc Nant Y Waun, Trevor Rowson and Cwmcelyn Ponds Local Nature Reserves. The Ebbw Fach Trail runs through the area towards Abertillery. The area is also the access point for West Monmouthshire Golf Club.

There are a number of important heritage features, which include Brynmawr and District Museum, Market Hall Cinema, Dunlop Semtex Rubber Factory and the Nantyglo Roundhouse Towers.

The area is connected to neighbouring areas in the north by the A465 Heads of the Valleys Road, which has been recently upgraded to a dual carriageway.

The A467 runs north to south, as a bypass for the towns and settlements, connecting south to Abertillery.

The town does not have a direct train connection. However, in neighbouring Ebbw Vale and Abertillery there are three train stations which connect to Newport and Cardiff. The main bus provision is the X40 which connects westward to Ebbw Vale, Merthyr Tydfil and Cardiff, and eastward to Abergavenny, and Hereford in England. Additionally, the X1 connects Brynmawr to Pontypool, and the X15 connects Brynmawr to Newport.

The town centre of Brynmawr supports the northern neighbourhood area and offers a range of shopping and retail facilities. The 2016 Town Centre survey for the Local Development Plan shows within the town boundary there are 102 units, with a vacancy rate of 10%. The town also includes the local library and Learning Action Centre. Blaina supports the southern neighbourhood area and offers a small range of shopping facilities. The 2016 Town Centre survey for the Local Development Plan shows within the town boundary there are 55 units, with a vacancy rate of 22% (the highest in the Blaenau Gwent area). Blaina also has a part-time library.

Lakeside Retail Park is in the area and hosts a national supermarket, Asda and a number of surrounding retail outlets.

There are a number of industrial estates within the area, which provide opportunities for employment. These include Noble Square, Cwmcrachen, Barleyfields, and Rising Sun Industrial Estates and Blaina Enterprise Centre.

There are 6 primary schools in the area, one of which Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg is Blaenau Gwent's only Welsh medium language school. The five remaining primary schools are Blaenycwm, St. Mary's Roman Catholic, St Mary's Church in Wales, Coed-y-garn and Ystruth. Brynmawr Foundation School is an English medium mixed 11 to 16 school with approximately 750 pupils. Formal further education opportunities are offered via the Coleg Gwent

Blaenau Gwent Learning Zone, in Ebbw Vale.

One out of ten LSOA's (Lower Super Output Area's) that make up the Upper Ebbw Fach area has are eligible for Flying Start services (Nantyglo 3). The families within this area are provided with opportunities of free local childcare for 2-3 year olds; parenting support; speech, language and communication support and an enhanced Health Visiting service. There is one Flying Start registered childcare setting within the area and Flying Start services are accessed in community venues and at the Heart of the Valleys Integrated Children's Centre in Blaina. The area is also served by the Communities First programme.

The overall population of the Upper Ebbw Fach area is 14,821, which is 21% of the overall population of Blaenau Gwent. The area has slightly more people aged 0-15 years than in Blaenau Gwent overall, and fewer people aged 65 and over than in Blaenau Gwent overall.

The following provide key features from the demographic profile for the neighbourhood area from the Census 2011:



- Mean age of the population 40 years, just below the Welsh average of 40.6 years.
- 98.3% of population are white, similar to that witnessed for the Blaenau Gwent area, which is slightly above the rate noted for Wales overall. The largest ethnic minority groups are mixed/multiple ethnic groups (0.6%) and Asian or Asian British (0.6%).
- Almost three-quarters of residents identify themselves as Welsh only (72.8%), similar to that witnessed for the Blaenau Gwent area (72.4%). This is significantly above the rate noted for Wales overall (57.5%).
- Knowledge of Welsh is relatively low, with 12.1% indicating knowledge of Welsh, which is slightly above that witnessed for the Blaenau Gwent area (11.5%). This is significantly below the rate noted for Wales overall

(26.7%).

- Car ownership in the area is below that of the overall Wales level with just over one-quarter of population (28%) not having access to a car or van (Wales 22.9%).
- Almost three-quarters of people in the area felt their health was good (72.9%), similar to Blaenau Gwent overall (72.5%), but significantly below that witnessed for Wales (77.7%).
- In terms of housing, almost half are terraced (47.7%), this is below the rate for Blaenau Gwent overall (52.2%), but significantly above the rate of terraced housing for Wales overall (28%).
- Owner occupancy rates in the area at 59.9% are below the Wales rates at 67.7% and as a consequence an above average proportion rent their housing
- Economic activity rates for the area are 62.8%, which is slightly above the rate witnessed for Blaenau Gwent (62.1%) but below Wales overall (65.7%). Higher levels of inactivity can be linked to people who are permanently sick or disabled (9.9% compared to 6.3% for Wales overall).
- The area has considerably fewer people qualified to at least degree level (15.6%) than witnessed across Wales overall (24.5%), and considerably more people with no qualification (36.0%) than witnessed across Wales overall (25.9%).

Further details can be found in the [Census 2011 Statistics Overview for the Upper Ebbw Fach Valley](#).

Well-being Engagement in Upper Ebbw Fach

Below is a summary of key feedback associated to the North Ebbw Fach neighbourhood area from 'The Blaenau Gwent We Want' public engagement programme

Identified as 'Special things' in Upper Ebbw Fach area

- Bert Denning Centre
- Market Hall Cinema
- Ysbyty Aneurin Bevan
- Brynmawr Foundation School
- Proximity to natural landscapes

Identified as opportunities for 'Things to make Upper Ebbw Fach area a better place'

- Tackling anti-social behaviour and substance misuse
- Better transport, examples being a better, more reliable bus service
- Preserving the landscape for people and animals
- Better health services for older people
- Supporting the town high street
- More support for small businesses
- Fairer deal for the area
- Tackling obesity
- Cleaning our streets

Identified as being able to Help to make North Ebbw Fach area a better place

- Using local radio
- Keep Wales Tidy campaign
- Community Gardens maintained by residents
- Community involvement and participation
- Teaching in schools about our local history

Selection of relevant images from 'Blaenau Gwent We Want' process



Lower Ebbw Fach Valley

The South Ebbw Fach neighbourhood area is named after the main river that continues its journey through the area. The area contains the main town of Abertillery, including its neighbourhoods such as Bourneville, Rosheyworth, Blaenau Gwent, Pen y Bont, Rhiw Park, and Cwmtillery (North Abertillery MSOA).



The area also includes the southern community of Six Bells, and villages and settlements such as Aberbeeg, St Illtyd, Brynithel, Llanhilleth, and Swyfydd (all of which are in South Ebbw Vale MSOA).

The neighbourhood area includes the four local authority electoral wards of Cwmtillery, Abertillery, Six Bells and Llanhilleth which are represented by 11 ward members/councillors (of the 42 elected members for the borough). The area also has the Abertillery & Llanhilleth Community Council.

The geography is typical for valleys communities with urban settlements clustered on the valley base and surrounding hillsides. The southern edge of the area borders the neighbouring local authority areas of Caerphilly and Torfaen.

There are a number of natural landscapes that benefit the communities which include Cwmtillery Lakes, Rosheyworth Woodlands and Six Bells Local Nature Reserve. The Ebbw Fach Trail runs through the area.

The area has a number of important heritage features including The Six Bells Miners' Memorial, St Illtyd's Church, Llanhilleth Miners Institute, Metropole Theatre, and Abertillery and District Museum.

The A467 runs north to south, as a bypass for the whole area, connecting onto the Newport area where it meets the M4.

The area has a direct train connection to Cardiff and Newport (and Pye Corner). The train line has one train station at Llanhilleth.

The main bus provision is the X1 which connects the area to Brynmawr and Pontypool, and the X15 which connects the area Brynmawr and Newport. The 98 bus connects Abertillery to neighbouring Ebbw Vale.

The town centre of Abertillery supports the southern neighbourhood area and offers a mixed range of shopping and retail facilities. The 2016 Town Centre survey for the Local Development Plan shows within the town boundary there are 130 units, with a vacancy rate of 18%. The town also includes the local library. Abertillery also has one supermarket, Tesco, which sits on the outskirts of the town centre.

Abertillery has the Abertillery Sports Centre which offers a range of sports and recreational opportunities.

There are a number of industrial estates within the area, which provide opportunities for employment these include Rosheyworth Business Park, and Cwmtillery, Glandwr and Llanhilleth Industrial Estates.

In terms of education the area is served by the Abertillery Learning Community which is a 3 to 16 year campus for the Abertillery area. The campus includes Abertillery Comprehensive School, Abertillery, Queen Street and Bryngwyn Primary Schools, and Rosheyworth Millennium School. The area also has two other primary schools, Swffryd and St Illtyd's Primary (based in Llanhilleth).

Six* out of eleven LSOA's (Lower Super Output Area's) that make up the Lower Ebbw Fach area are eligible for Flying Start services (Abertillery 1, Cwmtillery 1, Llanhilleth 1,2 & 3 and Six Bells 1*Partially covered). The families within these areas are provided with opportunities of free local

childcare for 2-3 year olds; parenting support; speech, language and communication support and an enhanced Health Visiting service. Flying Start hubs are situated in Abertillery and Brynithel, with additional Flying Start registered childcare settings in Sofrydd, Roseheyworth and Blaina. The area is also served by the Communities First programme.

The overall population of the Lower Ebbw Fach area is 16,200, which is 23% of the overall population of the Blaenau Gwent area.

The following provide key features from the demographic profile for the neighbourhood area from the Census 2011:



- Mean age of the population 40.5 years, similar the Welsh average of 40.6 years.
- 98.6% of population are white, similar to that witnessed for the Blaenau Gwent area, which is slightly above the rate noted for Wales overall. The largest ethnic minority groups are mixed/multiple ethnic groups (0.7%) and Asian or Asian British (0.4%).
- Almost three-quarters of residents identify themselves as Welsh only (71.4%), similar to that witnessed for the Blaenau Gwent area (72.4%). This is significantly above the rate noted for Wales overall (57.5%).
- Knowledge of Welsh is relatively low, with 10.3% indicating knowledge of Welsh, which is below that witnessed for the Blaenau Gwent area (11.5%). This is significantly below the rate noted for Wales overall (26.7%).
- Car ownership in the area is below that of the overall Wales level with almost one-third of population (32%) not having access to a car or van (Wales 22.9%).
- Almost three-quarters of people in the area felt their health was good (71.2%), similar to Blaenau Gwent overall (72.5%), but significantly below that witnessed for Wales (77.7%).

- In terms of housing, a significant majority are terraced (64.9%), this is above the rate for Blaenau Gwent overall (52.2%), and significantly above the rate of terraced housing for Wales overall (28%).
- Owner occupancy rates in the area at 63.7% are below the Wales rates at 67.7% and as a consequence an above average proportion rent their housing.
- Economic activity rate for the area, 61.3%, is slightly below the rate witnessed for Blaenau Gwent (62.1%) and Wales overall (65.7%). Higher levels of inactivity can be linked to above average levels of people who are retired (16.5% compared to 16.1% for Wales overall), and people who are permanently sick or disabled (10% compared to 6.3% for Wales overall).
- The area has considerably fewer people qualified to at least degree level (13.2%) than witnessed across Wales overall (24.5%), and considerably more people with no qualifications (37.5%) than witnessed across Wales overall (25.9%).

Further details can be found in the [Census 2011 Statistics Overview for the South Ebbw Fach Valley](#).

Well-being Engagement in Lower Ebbw Fach

Below is a summary of key feedback associated to the South Ebbw Fach neighbourhood area from The 'Blaenau Gwent We Want' public engagement programme.

Identified as 'Special things' in Lower Ebbw Fach area

- Local landscapes
- Cwmtillery Lakes
- Local festivals
- Guardian, Six Bells
- Six Bells Nature Reserve
- GP Surgeries

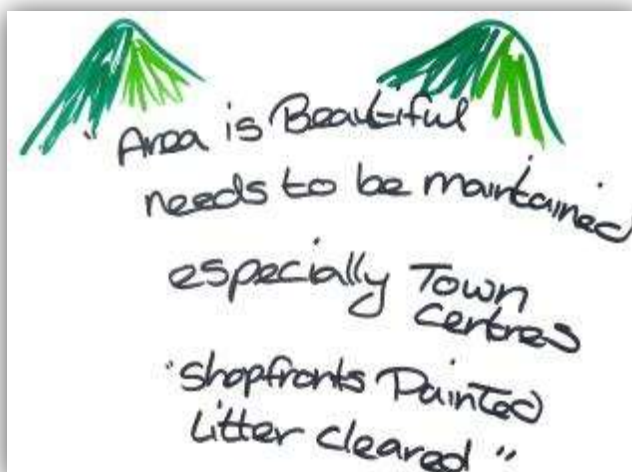
Identified opportunities for 'Things to make Lower Ebbw Fach area better place'

- More for children and young people to do, examples being better parks
- Encourage people to be responsible for health and welfare
- More Community Safety presence and enforcement with a focus on making the area safer, particularly at night.
- Fairer Care Services for People with Physical and Mental Disabilities
- More restorative justice with people giving effort back to their community
- More effective waste and recycling, including public waste bins. Do more to prevent fly tipping
- Better shop opportunities
- Improve public transport opportunities and infrastructure
- More effective use of grants and fairer deal for Abertillery
- Remembering people in the community without access to cars and internet

Identified as being able to help to make North Ebbw Fach area a better place

- Public litter picking sessions
- Promoting assets to be used as community centres

Selection of relevant images from 'Blaenau Gwent We Want' process



3.6 Key Future Trends

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 places a statutory duty on Welsh Government to publish a Future Trend Report for Wales every five years. This purpose of this report is to present likely future trends affecting economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being in Wales.

The first report outlines a number of key known trends that are likely to occur using projections from existing information. It focuses on major underlying drivers for change with impact on future social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being. These are:

1. **Population Changes** - Wales is expected to experience an overall increase in population, with the average age rising, and significant increases in the proportion of people aged 65 and over.
2. **Climate Change** – Average temperatures in Wales are rising, with the occurrence of extreme weather accompanying the increase in temperature. Expected consequences being considered by the UK Climate Change Risk Assessment are: flooding; risks to health and well-being from temperature increases; shortages in water, agriculture, energy; effects on ecosystems, soils and biodiversity; and food production and trade.
3. **Changes in our Economy** – Uncertainty is particularly high on the economic outlook, linked to low rates of productivity growth since the recession and the likely impact of the UK leaving the European Union.
4. **Health** - Life expectancy and healthy life expectancy are expected to increase in Wales, however inequalities in health is likely to persist. Furthermore, with an ageing population there will be more likelihood of people developing chronic conditions. It is expected that rates of smoking and low birth weight babies will decrease, however it is expected that rates of obesity will continue to increase.

5. Welsh Language – Future trends for the Welsh language are highly dependent on young people retaining and using Welsh they learn in school. It is anticipated that Welsh language skills levels will rise in the future, but levels of language fluency and primary use will depend on young people continuing to use Welsh as a main language.

Future Trends in population for Blaenau Gwent

It is helpful to understand how our population numbers and structure might change in the future. In Wales, significant demographic and social changes are expected in the next few decades.

The overall Wales' population is projected to rise by around 200,000 from 3.1m to 3.3m by around 2033. This growth is due to natural change through births and deaths and also through inward migration from the rest of the UK or internationally in Wales.

The report also notes that across Wales, household numbers are projected to increase by 15%, however average household size is expected to decrease with more one person households, and households of two people without children.

Furthermore, population change will impact education in Wales, as projected growth in the number of young people up to 2023, will impact on the requirement for school places, teachers, HE student numbers, 16-19 provision and wider resources

Blaenau Gwent is predicted to buck this national population trend, with the overall population expected to decrease. Current population projections (2014 base) suggest the population of Blaenau Gwent is projected to decrease by 1.2% by 2026 and 4.9% by 2039 (66,258), although projections become less reliable over more extensive time periods.

Blaenau Gwent is expected to notice some similar population trend changes when considering the make-up of the population by age group. The information below shows key trends in population projections by three distinct age groups (0-15, 16 to 64 and 65 and over):

- The projected percentage of the population aged 0 – 15 years over the period 2014 to 2039 is expected to decrease by 2% in Blaenau Gwent to 10,726 people. This decrease is in contrast to the expected increase across Wales overall.
- The projected percentage of the population aged 16 – 64 years over the period 2014 to 2039 is to significantly decrease by 16% in Blaenau Gwent to 36,913 people.
- The projected percentage of the population aged 65 – 74 years over the period 2014 to 2039 is to significantly increase by 39% in Blaenau to 18,619 people. This is in-line with expectation across Wales overall.

Future Geographical Trends for Blaenau Gwent

Blaenau Gwent has an urban landscape which is shaped by the distinct geography, and social and economic history.

The adopted Local Development Plan for Blaenau Gwent 2006 to 2021 outlines a spatial strategy for the area and highlights key land use and adopted land use plans for the growth and regeneration of our area. These include:

- Housing allocation of 3,500 new homes to encourage population growth in Blaenau Gwent, with a specific focus in the neighbourhood areas of Ebbw Fawr, Sirhowy and Upper Ebbw Fach as a consequence of land availability. There is little opportunity for housing

allocation in Lower Ebbw Fach therefore the regenerating of the area will focus on re-use, under-use and derelict properties.

- Increase land opportunities for employment options to encourage diversification of the economy, with a specific focus in the Ebbw Fawr valley to exploit opportunities offered by the A465 Heads of the Valley Road.
- Improvements in town centres focused on viability with a retail hierarchy. Ebbw Vale developed as a sub-regional centre, with the remaining town centres set up to serve the needs of their local population and explore complementary roles around tourism, heritage and culture.
- The plan also outlines the intention to extend the rail link from Llanhilleth to Abertillery in South Ebbw Fach.

3.7 Thinking to our Future - An Overview of Strategic Challenges and Opportunities

Leaving the EU - Brexit

In June 2016 the United Kingdom took part in a national referendum of the country's on-going involvement in the European Union (EU). The referendum vote was to leave (51.9% to 48.1%), and a protracted process for the United Kingdom's exit from EU –commonly referred to as Brexit.

The electorate of Blaenau Gwent voted in favour of Brexit, with 68.1% of registered voters taking their opportunity to express their personal preference (34812 counted and verified ballot papers). Almost two-thirds of voters in Blaenau Gwent voted to leave (62%, or 21,587 people). The remaining 38% voted to remain (13,215), with just 10 ballots being rejected.

The proportion of people voting to leave in Blaenau Gwent, at 62%, was significantly above that witnessed nationally across the UK (51.9%), and the highest proportion of leave voters in any area in Wales (52.5%).

Source: <http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/find-information-by-subject/elections-and-referendums/past-elections-and-referendums/eu-referendum/electorate-and-count-information>

As a consequence of the results, the area has become an 'indicator' town for Brexit, with many national and international news agencies using Blaenau Gwent (notably Ebbw Vale) for news stories highlighting the high amount of leave voters given that the area has been a net benefactor of European Structural Funds.

On 29 March 2017 the UK Government started the withdrawal process from the EU, developing a [Plan for Britain](#) which places the UK on course to leave by April 2019.

Understanding the future consequences of the Brexit for the Blaenau Gwent is challenging, particularly as the Plan for Britain does not provide specific details on the approach, but more sets out a high level strategic intention.

Looking Back at Investment in Blaenau Gwent from EU Funds

Over the course of EU fund availability (beginning in 2000) the Blaenau Gwent area has benefited from significant European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and European Social Funding (ESF).

In the 2000 to 2006 notable projects from the ERDF programme were the £7.5m for Ebbw Valley Railway and over £1m in the Llanhilleth Area Regeneration Scheme for the Miners Institute and St Illtyd Primary School.

Between 2007 to 2013 notable projects included £7.3m for the Blaenau Gwent Learning Zone - the post-16 education facility, and significant town centre regeneration schemes of £4.5m for Ebbw Vale and £3.2m for Abertillery. A further £3.8m allowed for the Primary Distributor Road to be constructed through the former Works site in Ebbw Vale.

In terms of the ESF programme, notable projects from 2007 to 2013 include the investment of over £6m provided for PreVENT Key Stage 3, PreVENT 14 to 19, Bridges into Work, Working Skills for Adults and HEDFAN projects helping 11,900 people into further learning and 4,660 people into work.

In all the examples used above (and many others not mentioned) the availability of EU Funds were vital in ensuring the projects proceeded, and acted as a catalyst for both physical and social regeneration.

European Funding in 2014 to 2020

Blaenau Gwent continues to benefit from structural funding with approved projects being supported in the current programme. The area is the lead beneficiary on regional projects including Inspire 2 Achieve (£18.9m- ESF) and Inspire 2 Work (£7.3m- ESF). Furthermore, the area is a partner in the Bridges into Work (£5.5m) and Working Skills for Adult II (£3.8m).

Furthermore, there a number of projects which benefit the area being led by Welsh Government including Ebbw Valley Railway Line Frequency (£25m), and Building for the Future – Tredegar Townscape Heritage Initiative and Tredegar Arms (£1.1m).

There are also proposed projects including Business Innovation and Enterprise (£2m) and Horizon 2020: Drive (£0.5m).

Impact of Brexit on Existing and Proposed Projects

There should be no specific funding issues for projects already agreed as part of the EU Funds process (2014-2020), with the UK Government committing to providing funds to enable the delivery of existing projects until their closure dates. This would only be affected by a retraction from the UK Government - Although there is no reason to believe this would occur, a UK Government election, for example, could theoretically alter matters.

There is no specific mandate from the UK Government to replace the EU Funds for West Wales and Valleys in their Plan for Britain, therefore there is considerable uncertainty in whether the area will continue to receive the same substantial levels of structural funding which have been available since the accessibility of EU funds made available in 2000.

What will be the impact for Blaenau Gwent?

- The challenge of accessing the same level of structural funding to support regional and social development e.g. hundreds of millions of

financial support have been drawn into in the area since 2000 to help reduce the gap between the area and the average GDP for the EU.

This is particularly pertinent given the levels of poverty/deprivation remains high regardless of the structural funding invested.

- The opportunity to access state aid or increasing spending into public services introduced by national UK government as a consequence of the £13 billion saving the UK will make from not contributing to the EU.
- Potential opportunities and risks associated to the access to the single market and trade deals, particularly manufacturing companies – where Blaenau Gwent has above average proportionality.
- Significant risks associated to supporting young people to improve their life chances, particularly those identified as being at risk of becoming NEET.
- The challenge of BREXIT being used as a catalyst to nurture community cohesion tensions.
- The challenges associated to the outward migration of EU citizens could have a negative effect on the health and social care sector.
- The opportunities to reduce public service costs through procurement rules being realigned to be UK focused, as opposed to EU.

United Kingdom Austerity

The UK Government continues a fiscal policy programme of austerity in response to the recession in 2008 with the intention to reduce budget deficits and reform the welfare state.

The fundamental effects of the programme in Wales can be seen from on-going pressures on the delivery of public services, as budgets are constrained, and reforming of the welfare state with a focus on reducing the overall cost of welfare through key initiatives such as the introduction of a

benefit cap, universal credit as a single means-tested benefit replacing the variety of benefits previously available, and Personal Independence Payments to replace the Disability Living Allowance.

On-going spending cuts for public service in Wales

Public Service in Wales continues to be hit by austerity. In 2017, Welsh Government highlighted that despite a commitment from UK Government to additional allocations for Wales of £149m in revenue between 2017/18 and 2019/20 there are on-going, long term pressures on public service budgets. Overall, the budget for Wales will be 8% lower in real terms by 2020 than it was ten years earlier in 2010.

Furthermore, the current Chancellor for the UK Government has indicated that there will be no let-up in fiscal austerity in the foreseeable future.

Wales continues to witness protection for health and social care services. However, the protection on financial resources is being outstripped by an ever-increasing demand for key services as societal changes associated with an ageing population continue to be witnessed.

Welfare Reform

In 2017, the Welfare Reform programme continues to cut deep into the communities of Blaenau Gwent.

The report [*The Impact of Welfare Reform on the Valleys*](#) produced in 2014 by Sheffield Hallam University and Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research outlined the severity of welfare reform on the South Wales Valleys – identifying the areas as one which will be the hardest hit by Welfare Reform. For Blaenau Gwent it was estimated there would be a direct loss of at least £700 a year per working age adult, which would equate to £31m of income a year to the Blaenau Gwent economy. The report outlined that every

electoral ward in the area would witness financial losses from welfare reform that were above the Wales average.

Furthermore, indirect job losses in consumer services would be noticed as a consequence of reduced level of income.

What will be the impact for Blaenau Gwent?

- The challenge of delivering effective, efficient and sustainable public services to the people of Blaenau Gwent at a reduced cost continues to be a challenge. This continues to be a challenge for public services with an on-going requirement to redesign services, implement alternative delivery model, outsourcing of services to third party providers, and overall reduction in staff – which for the area makes a big impact as public service are the area's largest employers
- The challenge for people living in the area to have an appropriate quality of life, particularly given that the area has high levels of people in receipt of UK welfare and are seen as living in poverty/deprivation.
- The opportunity for austerity to lead to more financial efficient public services.

Cardiff Capital Region Deal

The [Cardiff Capital Region](#) is made up of an area of South East Wales, consisting of ten local authorities. Blaenau Gwent has joined forces with the other authorities to promote south east Wales as a great place to live, work and do business. The City Region approach works on the concept that most people and businesses operate beyond traditional administrative boundaries.

This will focus on tackling regional economic development and issues that affect the whole region such as improved transportation links, skills training, innovation and growth and regional identity.

The City Deal comprises an investment programme of £1.2 billion, including £734 million for the creation of a South East Wales Metro transport scheme.

What will be the impact for Blaenau Gwent?

- The opportunity for Blaenau Gwent to work with nine other local authorities to organise economic and regional development to compete in a new global market.
- The opportunity for people from the area to benefit from an integrated infrastructure such as the Wales Metro which will be developed to allow the effective, efficient and sustainable movement of people, goods and information. This will lead to improvements in train times, reduced 'bottlenecks' on the road network, improved data access in all our major towns and cities, and improving access to 4G.
- The opportunity for developing skills for life that meet the needs of our businesses and communities.
- The opportunity of growth at the [Ebbw Vale Enterprise Zone](#) highlighted for maximising and strengthening the areas manufacturing heritage.
- The challenge of the area being not considered due to being at the periphery of the region given its physical location.

Tackling Poverty

Tackling the impacts of poverty on current generations and preventing poverty for future generations continues to be a strong policy driver for national policy and public service delivery.

Blaenau Gwent as an area is defined as having a high proportion of poverty, which leads to be people in the deprivation. The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation is used as the official measure of relative deprivation for small areas in Wales. This index has been developed to identify those small areas where there are highest concentrations of several different types of deprivation.

The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivations shows that Blaenau Gwent has a high proportion of small areas in the most deprived 10% in Wales (23.4%).

The Welsh Government has supported a number of national based anti-poverty programmes in Wales for a number of years, from which the people of Blaenau Gwent have benefited from. These programmes include:

- **Flying Start** –an early years programme for families with children under four years of age living in disadvantaged areas in Wales. The programme focuses on: supporting quality childcare; enhancing health visiting; access to parenting programmes; and support to families with speech, language and communication difficulties. Blaenau Gwent has significant coverage of Flying Start across the area, with one third of the area benefiting from the programme.
- **Families First** –a programme targeting improving outcomes for children, young people and families. The focus of programme is to: help working age people in low income families gain, and progress within employment; support children, young people and families, in or at risk of poverty, to achieve their potential; promote healthy lifestyles and enjoy well-being; and ensure families are confident, nurturing resilient

and safe. Blaenau Gwent has significant coverage of Families First across the area, with a dedicated support team based which tackle issues facing families following Joint Assessment Family Framework (JAFF). A Team Around the Family (TAF) approach is used to support the process. The Team is based at the Hearts of the Valleys Integrated Children's Centre, in Blaina, Upper Ebbw Fach.

- **Communities First** was launched in 2001 by Welsh Government as the flagship government programme to tackle community focussed poverty for the most disadvantaged in Wales. Due to high levels of multiple deprivation, as defined by such measure as the WIMD, Blaenau Gwent has had virtually complete coverage by this programme since it was launched. Following a number of implementation phases, which has seen amendments to how the programme has been targeted and applied, in early 2017 the Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children announced that the programme would be phased out. The Secretary noted that the programme had been successful in its impact on many individuals in poverty but noted that the programme had not had the desired impact on overall poverty. The programme will be replaced by a new cross-government strategic approach not necessarily focused on targeting small geographic areas. Indications are that the new approach will focus on employment, early years and empowerment.
- **Supporting People** – This national programme provides housing-related support to help vulnerable people to live as independently as possible, and is noted by Welsh Government as a key programme to helping people living in poverty. Across Wales over £120m is invested in the programme, which support almost 60,000 people to live independently, a large proportion of which (over two-thirds) are older

people. The programme supports people experiencing domestic abuse, people with disabilities, people with substance misuse issues, offenders, refugees, people with chronic illness, young people, single parent families, and older people.

In Blaenau Gwent the programme commits over £2.5m of expenditure and supports over 700 vulnerable people, with further details available in the [Blaenau Gwent Supporting People Local Commissioning Plan 2017/2020](#).

What will be the impact for Blaenau Gwent?

- The opportunity continues to maximise existing national anti-poverty programmes to tackle the root causes of poverty.
- The challenge of implementing a new national anti-poverty programme to replace Communities First.
- The challenge of filling the gap of existing provision from Communities First to local people, and effect on other public service providers.

The Circuit of Wales

This on-going proposal is to create a new international development in the Blaenau Gwent area which will host a motor racing circuit and technology park. The development would offer additional diverse range of facilities for business, sport, leisure, culture and the arts. The proposed project would see an over £400m development constructed in the Ebbw Fawr neighbourhood area, just off the A465 Heads of the Valleys Road.

The exciting proposal for the area was first proposed in 2011, and continues to be considered in 2017. Currently a new financial proposal is being considered by the Welsh Government, with a big obstacle being the amount public money which would be committed to the project.

What will be the impact for Blaenau Gwent?

- The opportunity to create local jobs to develop and sustain an international relevant tourism complex, with a focus on hosting the MotoGP, but delivering a 365-day a year venue.
- The challenge of managing the expectation placed on the Circuit of Wales as the 'main' economic future for the area.
- The challenge of ensuring economic viability and sustainability to the project.
- The challenge of the environmental impact associated with implementing the proposal on common land on the edge of the nationally significant Brecon Beacons National Park.

Climate Change

It is recognised the Wales' climate is changing, with a clear scientific case that the change being witnessed is as a consequence of human activity and the way we live our lives.

Welsh Government published a [strategy](#) to tackling Climate Change which was published in 2010 which demonstrates the case for change to tackle the causes and consequences of climate change, and set a vision for 2050. The strategy was supported by an [annual report](#) in December 2014, and in recent year's in Wales, legalisation has been passed to support the long term plan. This includes the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, which places sustainable development at the heart of public service delivery, and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 which focuses on the sustainable management of natural resources and requires the Government to set a new emission reduction target to help meet our nation's commitment to tackling climate change.

Furthermore, the Committee on Climate Change has recently produced the [*UK Climate Change Risk Assessment 2017 – Summary 2017*](#)

What will be the impact for Blaenau Gwent?

- The opportunity to play active role in tackling climate change, and ensuring that people in Blaenau Gwent are living within their means.
- The challenge of dealing with the consequence on society of climate change from changing weather patterns [i.e. heavier rain and potentially hotter temperatures], and how this affects people lives e.g. increased likelihood of flooding incident, effecting water quality and sewage systems, and movement of natural landscapes [example being landslide Blaina, Upper Ebbw Fach].

- The challenge of dealing with the consequence on society of climate change in relation to public health, e.g. pressures on services such as health and social care as they deal with people exposed to weather extremities e.g. heat waves, sustained cold periods and changes in air quality.
- The challenge of supporting our natural environment and the wildlife that lives within it. Increasing temperatures will have a direct effect on wildlife, putting pressure on their established patterns for survival. This is likely to affect local habitat in the area and migration patterns.
- The challenge of food availability is not regularly considered due to the reliability of the food chain in the UK. However, as the UK chain is heavily reliant on imports from across the world, any failures as a consequence of global climate issues, there is the potential for a 'knock on' effect to people living in Blaenau Gwent. A key example of this being in February 2017 where bad weather in Spain and Italy in the winter months affected the availability of vegetable crops for exporting to markets such as the UK. The consequence of this to local people would be an increase in costs for fruit and vegetable, which for a generation have been widely available to the community at reasonable prices.



3.8 Globally Responsible Blaenau Gwent

Blaenau Gwent is a small area in terms of population and geographical size, however this has not deterred the area in the past from having significant impact on a national and international level. Below are a few high level examples of what is happening in the area that show our global responsibilities.

Syrian Refugee Programme

Partner organisations in the area support this programme and have worked to support the relocation Syrian families into Blaenau Gwent during this global humanitarian crisis. This programme continues to be supported and the area, and its people, remains committed to playing an appropriate role during this on-going crisis.

Welsh Future Home

The Works site in Ebbw Vale is housing an experimental, low energy homes initiative which look to provide a blueprint for more sustainable zero carbon homes for the future.

Renewable Energy

The area is seeing a significant growth in the creation of clean, renewable energy. This includes solar energy creation at Hafod y Dafal Solar Farm and wind energy via six wind turbines around the borough.



4. Economic Well-being

Economic Well-Being

This well-being chapter focuses on economic well-being. It has been developed collaboratively by partner organisations represented on the Blaenau Gwent Public Service Board.

Economic well-being is identified as one of the four key sustainable development pillars for improvement by the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

Economic well-being can be defined as the key economic indicators which show how well an area is performing financial. Under the principles of sustainable development economic well-being should not be seen in isolation focusing on the needs of only those in the present. Sustainable economic development will take appropriate and measured consideration of the impact of social and cultural equity and the environmental viability of an area now and for future generations.

For this well-being assessment for Blaenau Gwent the following sections or measures are considered:

1. [Economic Activity](#)
2. [Working Households](#)
3. [Income](#)
4. [Business](#)
5. [Education and Skills for Work](#)
6. [Travel to Work](#)

Section 4.1: Economic Activity

1. Overview

Economic activity for an area is made up of two fundamental components, those in the area that are economically active and those that are economically inactive. The economically active are either in employment or unemployed but able to work. The economically inactive include people who are looking after family, long-term sick, retired and students in full time education.

The level of economic activity in an area, in particular the level of employment, is crucial to ensure adequate levels of income for its residents to afford a good standard of living, in terms for example, of material goods, quality and affordability of housing, meeting costs of goods and services, and leisure/cultural activities.

2. What is the data saying

2.1 Blaenau Gwent Level

Employment

Figure EA1 shows the percentage of working age people in the Gwent region who are employed ranged from 65.4% (29,200) in Blaenau Gwent to 77.7% in Monmouthshire in June 2016. The local employment rate was the lowest of 22 local authorities in Wales. The percentage for Wales was 71.3%

Figure EA1: People Employed

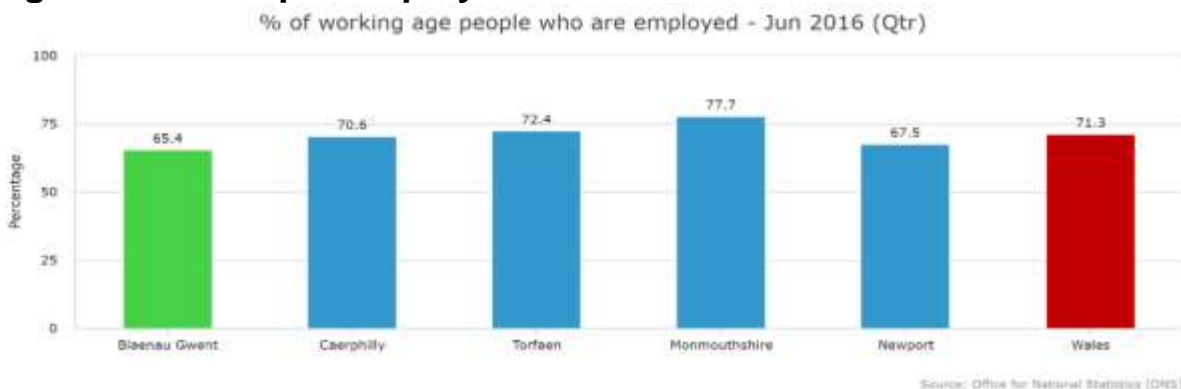
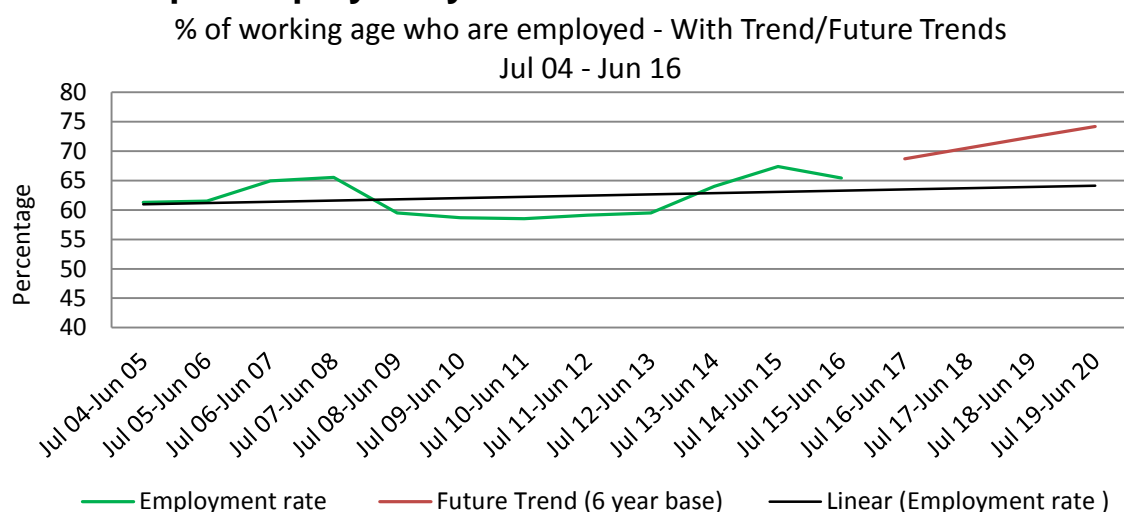


Figure EA2 shows an overall upward trend in the rate of employed over the last 12 years. A future projection of this shows a general increase in the rate of employed over the next 4 years in Blaenau Gwent.

Figure EA2: People Employed by Time



Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS)

Self Employed

The percentage of working age people self-employed in June 2016 was 6.1% (2,800) in Blaenau Gwent. This compares to 9.3% for Wales for the same period. Over the period June 2013 to June 2016 the percentage of self-employed increased by 2.3% of working age. This compares to an increase of 0.4% in Wales.

Childcare Sufficiency

The [Blaenau Gwent Childcare Sufficiency Assessment](#) 2017 indicates that Blaenau Gwent has a reasonable range of types of provision across most community planning areas. However, recent engagement identified childcare costs as being too expensive and also highlighted a need for more flexible opening times/wraparound arrangements and an in-depth gap analysis is planned to identify areas that may need to be targeted to improve sufficiency.

Occupation Type

In June 2016, the percentage of people in Blaenau Gwent employed as managers and senior officials was 6.7%, compared to 9.2% at a Wales level. The percentage of people employed in professional occupations in Blaenau Gwent was 10.7% compared to 17.7% for Wales.

In contrast, the percentage of people employed in caring, leisure and other service occupations in Blaenau Gwent was 13.7%, compared to 10.6% for Wales.

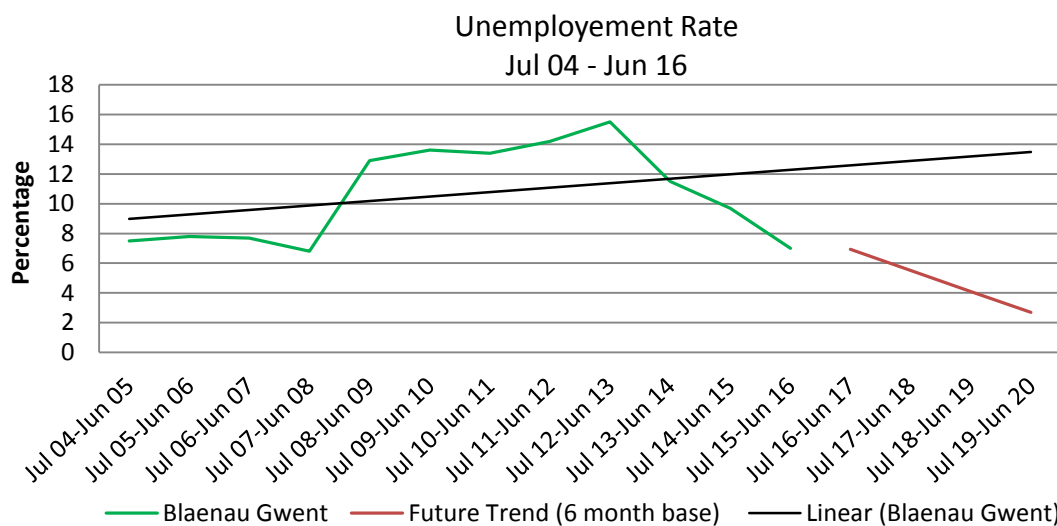
Unemployment

In June 2016, the unemployment rate of 7.0% (2,200) in Blaenau Gwent was the highest of 22 local authorities in Wales and compares with the all Wales rate of 5.0%.

Figure EA3 shows that the unemployment rate was as high as 15.5% in 2012/2013. This was followed by a downward trend to 7.0% in 2016, its second lowest level over a 12 year period.

With long-term unemployment an upward trend has been seen over 12 years. Therefore, a future projection of this shows a general increase in the rate of unemployed over the next 4 years. However, where the future projection is based on the latest 6 years, the next 4 years shows a general decrease in the rate of employment.

Figure EA3: Unemployment Rate



Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS)

Job Vacancies

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) Vacancy Survey provides data at a UK level, however, no job vacancy figures at local authority level are published.

Long term sick

EA4 shows that 42.4% of those who were economically inactive in December 2015 were long-term sick. This compares to 28.5% for Wales for the same period.

Figure EA4: People who are long-term sick

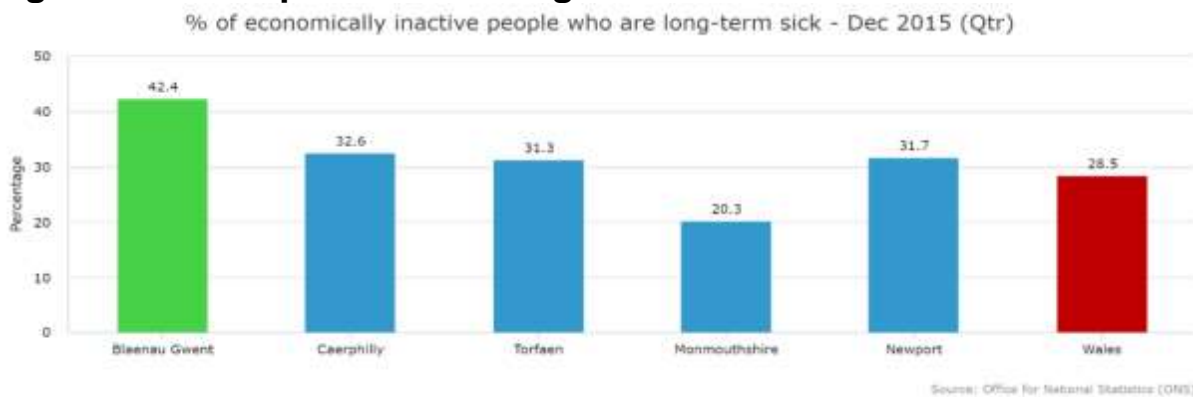
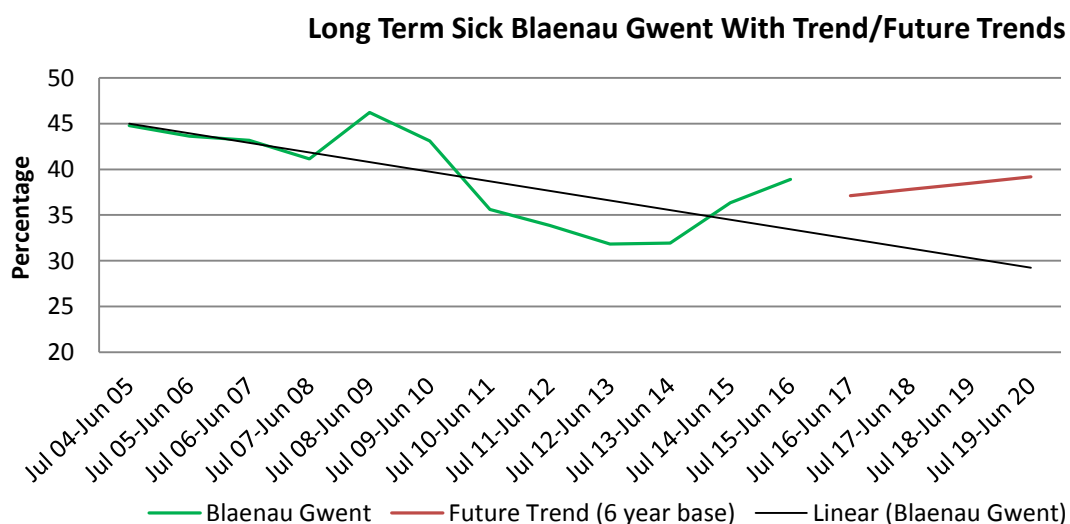


Figure EA5 shows that the 5 year fall in long term sickness in Blaenau Gwent during 2008 to 2014, from 46.2% to 31.9% was followed by a 2 year increase, rising to 38.9% in 2016. Although an increase was also seen at a Wales level over the same period, Blaenau Gwent still has 10.4% more long term sickness of its economically inactive population than the Wales level in 2016.

Overall, a downward trend has been seen over the last 12 years. Therefore, a future projection of this shows a general decrease in the rate of long term sickness over the next 4 years. However, where the future projection is based on the latest 6 years, the next 4 years shows a general increase in the rate of long term sickness.

Figure EA5: People who are long-term sick by time



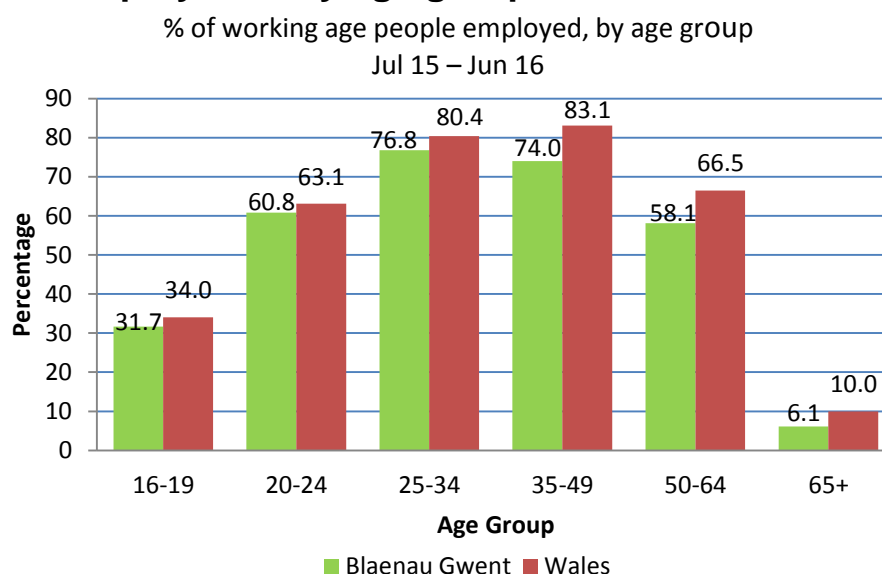
Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS)

Age group and gender comparisons

Figure EA6 shows the employment rate by age group in Blaenau Gwent compared to Wales. In Blaenau Gwent the employment rate ranges for working age from 31.7% in the 16-19 age group to 76.8% in the 25-34 age group. The lower employment rates for 16-19 and 20-24 year olds can be explained in part by the number of students while the lowest rates for 65 and over are due to retirement.

The general profile is similar at an all Wales level. However, the employment rate for Wales is higher than Blaenau Gwent for each age group, and also continues to rise to an older age group than in Blaenau Gwent, peaking at 83.1% for 35-49 year olds.

Figure EA6: Employment by age group



Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS)

The unemployment rate in Blaenau Gwent ranges between 26.2% for 16 – 19 year olds and 2.6% for 50 – 64 year olds. For Wales this is 22.9% and 2.9% respectively. Other than for 50 – 64 year olds, the unemployment rate is higher in Blaenau Gwent than Wales for all other age groups.

There is a significant difference in unemployment rate in the 20 -24 year age group, 22.8% in Blaenau Gwent compared to 9.7% in Wales.

In Blaenau Gwent a larger percentage of working age males are in employment, 68.1% (15,300) compared to 62.8% (14,000) females. A similar profile is evident at an all Wales level.

The percentage of working age males who are self-employed in June 2016 was 8.9% (2,000), this compares with 12.6% for Wales. The percentage of working age females who are self-employed in Blaenau Gwent in June 2016 was 3.3% (800), this compares with 6.0% for Wales.

In Blaenau Gwent 7.1% of males and 6.2% of females were employed as managers, directors and senior officials. However, there were fewer males, 9.2% compared to 12.4% of females employed in professional occupations.

The biggest proportion, 21.8% of males was employed as process, plant and machine operatives. For females, 22.6%, this was working in caring, leisure and service occupations.

2.3 Interpretation of data

Note: *that most of the data in this chapter comes from the Annual Population Survey (APS). APS estimates are based on samples, which are subject to sampling variability. Data is not available below local authority level.*

Blaenau Gwent has low levels of economic activity combined with the lowest employment rate and highest unemployment rate in Wales. However, an upward trend in the rate of employment has been seen over the last 12 years and projections based on this data show a general increase in the rate of employment over the next few years.

Some of the shortfall in the employment rate in Blaenau Gwent compared to Wales as a whole can be attributed to lower self-employment (despite showing encouraging increases), higher long-term sickness and looking after

family/home, and a tailing off of employment rates at an earlier age group than in general in Wales. Long term sickness rates in particular are significantly high in Blaenau Gwent and if the more recent upward trend is continued this will result in a future increase.

The recent childcare sufficiency assessment reports that there is a reasonable range of types of provision and a sufficient supply of places, indicated by the level vacancies. However, cost of childcare is too expensive, which could be a contributory factor in the relatively high level of economically inactive people in Blaenau Gwent 'looking after family'.

The employment rate for 16 – 19 year olds is significantly less than for 25- 34 year olds i.e. 31.7% compared to 76.8%. Although a similar profile is evident at a Wales level and the difference can be explained in part by the number of students.

The general profile is similar at an all Wales level. However, the employment rate for Wales is higher than Blaenau Gwent for each age group, and also continues to rise to an older age group than in Blaenau Gwent.

There is also more variance in the unemployment rate locally compared to Wales, in particular, with a significant difference in the 20 -24 year age group (22.8% compared to 9.7% respectively).

Blaenau Gwent residents tend to be employed in less affluent occupations than those in Wales in general, which also attract lower incomes.

2.4 What are the critical issues for public services to consider?

The critical issues for public services to consider are:

- The rate of employment, being the lowest in Wales. In particular for age 35 upwards, which shows greatest disparity compared to the all Wales level.
- The rate of unemployment, being the highest in Wales. In particular for 20-24 year olds, which is significantly higher than at an all Wales level.
- The rate of self-employed, which is notably lower than the all Wales level.
- The rate of long term sickness, which is significantly higher than the all Wales level
- The cost of childcare, identified as an issue by Blaenau Gwent citizens reported via the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment and could be a contributory factor in the level of those 'looking after family/home', which is notably higher than the all Wales level.

3. What research exists to help us develop a response to this/these issues?

‘AECOM (2015) Baseline Economic Analysis for South East Wales’

research was accessed to provide further insight into the local economy.

This states that Blaenau Gwent is the least competitive location in the UK, the skills base is consistently cited as a weakness and levels of self-employment are low despite an increase in business start-up. However, there exist a great number of strengths that can be maximised and opportunities pursued including:

- Tourism, leisure and heritage
- The Circuit of Wales
- Continuing support to social enterprise and micro businesses
- Work with specified local authorities in South East Wales to utilise ICT infrastructure
- Energy Related Manufacturing
- Physical infrastructure projects such as the M4 relief road, Cardiff Airport, and the Metro
- The City Deal for Cardiff
- Collaboration across local authority boundaries to ensure opportunities are seized upon in a strategic manner

‘CREW Regeneration Wales Toward a New Settlement (2014): A deep place approach to equitable and sustainable places’.

The report argues for a more localised economic model for Tredegar, which the authors believe could both eradicate poverty and achieve sustainability.

This states that four key local economic ‘sectors’ were identified that are critical to the future success of a more localised economy in Tredegar:

- food - there are serious implications of the current food model, particularly the environmental and food security problems associated with long supply chains;
- energy conservation and generation - energy conservation and energy generation are significant to the transition to a more localised economy in Tredegar;
- the care sector - a restructuring of social care on a local social cooperative model would be an essential element of the foundational economy; and
- e-commerce and employment - the creation of local infrastructure at the Ebbw Vale Works site, and a 'meanwhile use' business incubator facility at Tredegar could, if supported by relevant skills training, offer a significant contribution to the local economy.

A number of action points were developed and identified by the authors for consideration by Welsh Government, public sector and third sector organisations in Blaenau Gwent.

'Futures, Trends and Horizon Scanning for Welsh Local Government (2008) Economic Change'

This reports on the need for local authorities to factor in a wide range of 'sustainable development' issues not currently considered in many authority's approaches to strategic planning and service delivery. These can be loosely termed 'futures' issues. These are key and critical external factors which may affect the well-being and quality of life of communities in Wales in the future, These include climate change, global financial market disruption, increasing interdependence particularly in financial markets, greater economic contrasts between metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas, abandonment of low-medium level technologies and a focus on the knowledge and service economy and location of energy intensive industry outside Europe.

South East Wales Employment and Skills Plan – LSKIP

A report which outlines identified employer requirements across the region outlining significant skills' gaps in their existing workforce, skills shortages vacancies (SSVs) and skills deficiencies in new applicants. All sectors forecast future skills demand in what is recognised as a rapidly changing workplace both by technology and demography.

LSKIP is working as a catalyst between employers, learning, skills and training suppliers and funding agencies

The report provides a strategic direction to future requirements which will inform opportunities, directly linked to economic activity.

4. Five ways of working

4.1 Collaboration

<i>Adds no value</i>	<i>Adds some value</i>	<i>Adds moderate value</i>	<i>Critical to tackle the issue</i>
			✓

Partnership and ‘cross-PSB’ collaboration would be required to tackle the scale of the economic activity problems identified in this chapter. For example, with local authorities involved with the **Cardiff Capital Region Deal** investment programme and projects involving the Gwent Strategic Well-being Assessment Group (GSWAG); the Health Board in addressing long term sickness issues and the third sector involved in upskilling residents for employment.

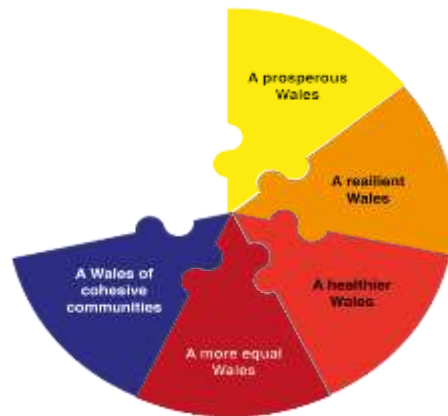
4.2 a) Integration – links with themes

<i>Economic</i>	<i>Social</i>	<i>Environmental</i>	<i>Cultural</i>
	✓	✓	

Addressing employment/unemployment in particular, should contribute to the social well-being of citizens in terms of improved emotional well-being, standard of living including better housing and a reduction in crime levels (for example, studies have shown that poverty is a strong driver of violent offending amongst young people).

If recommendations from the CREW study are implemented, measures could potentially involve restructuring of social care on a local social cooperative model. A localised economic model could also have a beneficial impact on energy conservation.

4.2b) Integration –Contribution to the National Goal



Supporting Commentary

Prosperous – an economy which generates wealth and provides employment opportunities, allowing people to take advantage of the wealth generated through securing decent work.

Resilient - supports social and economic resilience and the capacity to adapt to change (for example climate change).

Healthier - A society in which people's physical and mental well-being is maximised

Equal - A society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances (including their socio economic background and circumstances).

Cohesive - Attractive, viable, safe and well-connected communities.

4.3 Thinking to the Long Term

Short term (1-2)	<p>The future trend projected from a 6 year base show the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in employment • Decrease in unemployment • Increase in long term sickness
Medium term (2-5 years)	<p>The future trend projected from a 6 year base show the following:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in employment • Decrease in unemployment • Increase in long term sickness
Long term (10 years plus)	<p>Time span too long to have any confidence in extrapolated data from current trend.</p> <p>‘Futures, Trends and Horizon Scanning for Welsh Local Government (2008) Economic Change’ specify potential for:</p> <p><i>“...global financial market disruption, increasing interdependence particularly in financial markets, greater economic contrasts between metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas, abandonment of low-medium level technologies and a focus on the knowledge and service economy and location of energy intensive industry outside Europe.”</i></p>

4.4 Prevention

Interventions aimed at improving economic activity include; training and upskilling opportunities will be key contributors to lowering unemployment levels. A focus on sectors where there are identified skilled shortages and a range of entry levels, will be key e.g. care, hospitality, manufacturing and engineering. A further consideration will be wider support to the individuals to enable them to engage and access opportunities.

4.5 Involvement

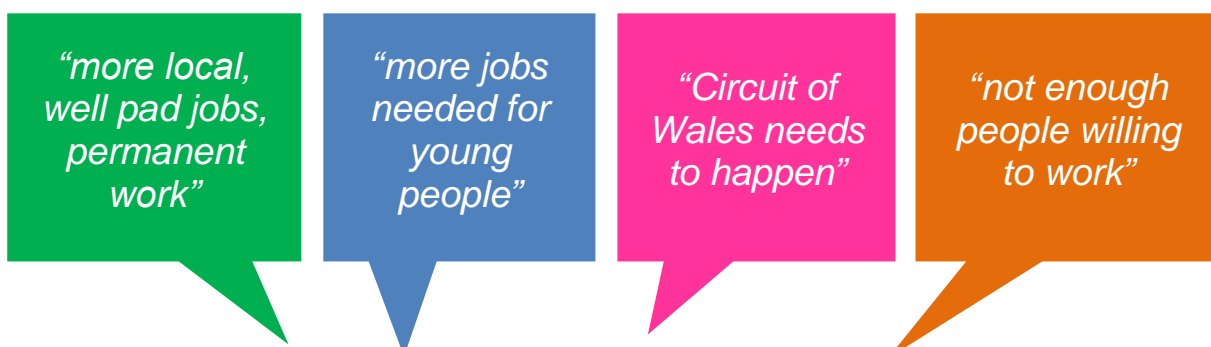
During the 'Blaenau Gwent We Want' Public Engagement Programme our topic 'Employment & Income' was very popular. Of all the comments we received 322 or 8% fell into this category making it the second most popular topic overall (behind Social Activities).

When we asked what things are important to people to live well and enjoy their lives 'Employment & Income' was the most popular topic with 55 or 13% of all comments falling into this category. The topic was also the second most popular when we asked what would make Blaenau Gwent a better place (261 comments, 10%).

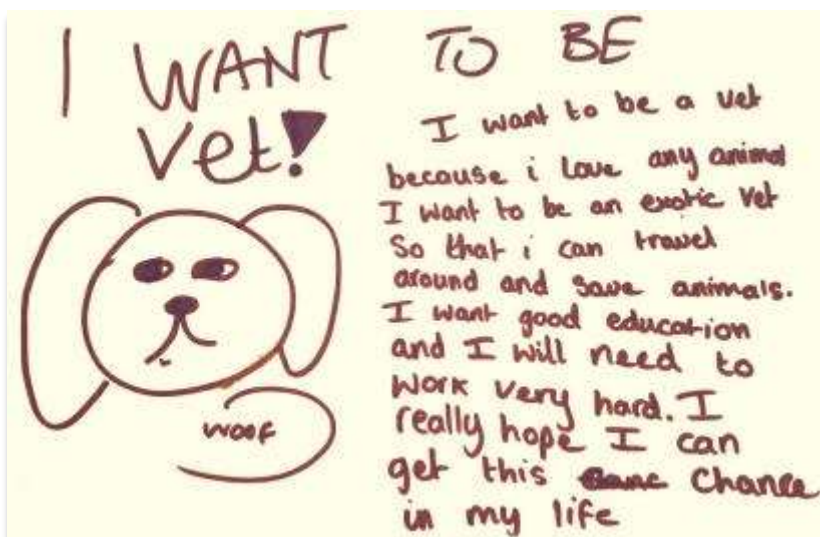
The main thing that people said was that they felt there was a lack of jobs, particularly good quality jobs, within the area.

People we spoke to in Upper Ebbw Fach valley (7% of comments) and Lower Ebbw Fach valley (6%) were less likely to say that Employment & Income needed to be improved than those in the Ebbw Fawr (11%) and Sirhowy (14%) Valleys. Those we engaged with in the Ebbw Fawr Valley were also more likely to reference the potential Circuit of Wales Development, mostly speaking positively about the added jobs it could bring to the area.

Some of the most popular things that people said:



Selection of relevant images from 'Blaenau Gwent We Want' process



5. What is currently being done to tackle this issue?

5.1 Is this issue currently being tackled in partnership?

The critical issues highlighted at 2.4 are currently being tackled by the Thriving and Vibrant Group within the single integrated plan overseen by the Public Service Board. This work includes tackling economic activity including jobs clubs, volunteering pathways, learning and skills programmes.

5.2 What wider assets could assist in tackling this issue?

Wider assets that could be used to tackle these issues includes interventions currently being delivered within the communities first programme. It is recognised this work is in a period of transition and is being monitored by the PSB.

6. What this tells us about Well-being in Blaenau Gwent

With identified gaps within key employment sectors there is an opportunity to work collaboratively to maximise opportunities for individuals to access employment and progress, reducing unemployment and increasing levels of economic activity.

Section 4.2: Working Households

1. Overview

Working households are those where all people aged 16 – 64 are working compared with workless households where all people aged 16 - 64 are unemployed or economically inactive.

It is important to have a minimal level of workless households in order to ensure prosperity and a good standard of living for the household members, including the life chances of children.

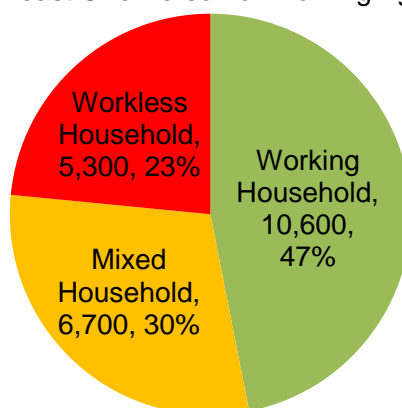
2. What is the data saying?

2.1 Blaenau Gwent Level

Figure WH01 shows the household status of working age people (aged 16 -64) in Blaenau Gwent as at 31 December 2015. The majority of households, 77% have at least some of the residents in employment i.e. 47% working households and 30% mixed. There are 23% workless households.

Figure WH01: Working Household Status

Household Status 2015, Blaenau Gwent With At Least One Person of Working Age



Source: Annual Population Survey 2015

Figure WH02 shows that the percentage of workless households in the Gwent region in 2015 ranged from 10.8% in Monmouthshire to 23.6% in Blaenau Gwent. The authority also has the 3rd highest rate of 22 local authorities in Wales. The overall rate at a Wales level is 18.3%.

Figure WH02: Workless households by area

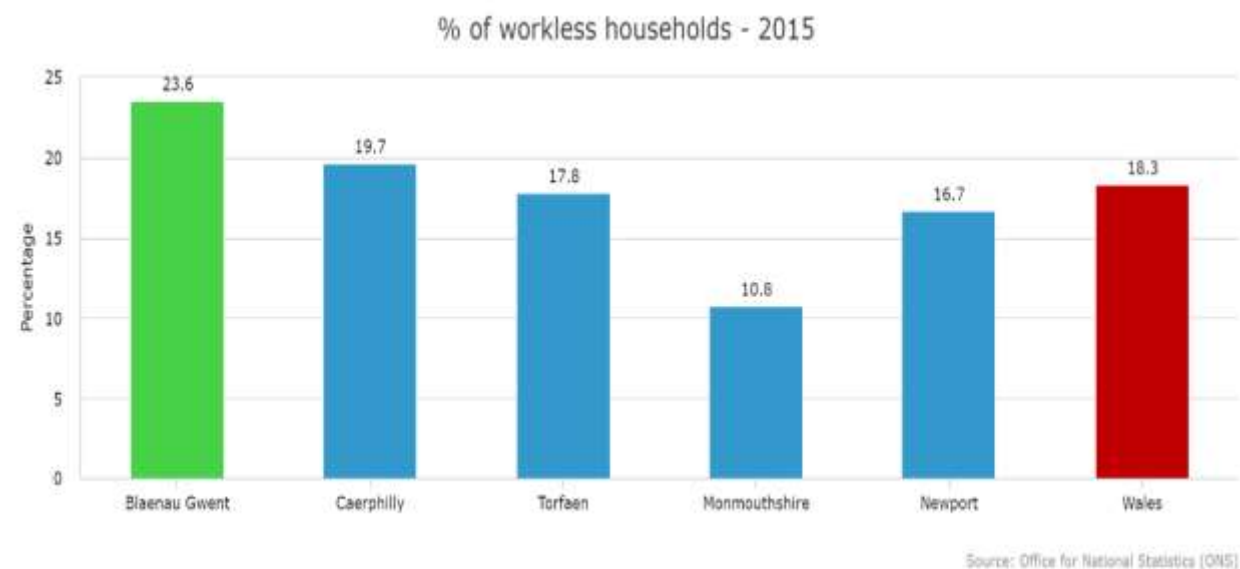
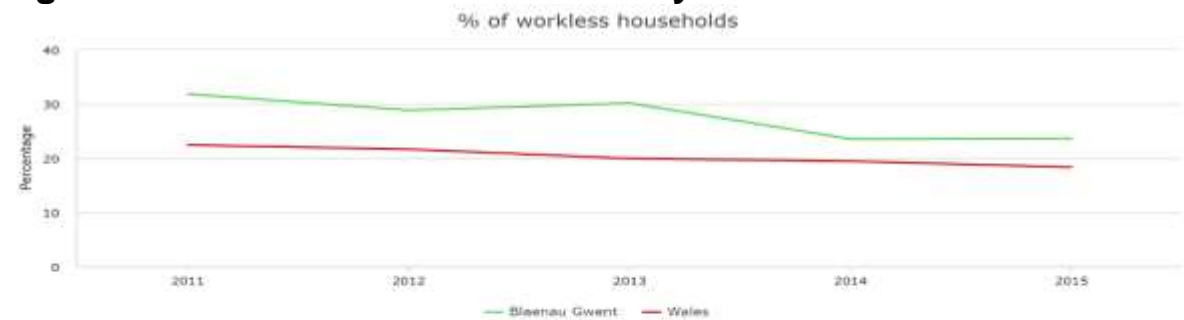


Figure WH03 shows the percentage of workless households over the period 2011 to 2015. Blaenau Gwent saw a decrease of 8.2% points, compared with a decrease of 4.1% points for Wales over the same period.

Figure WH03: Workless households by time

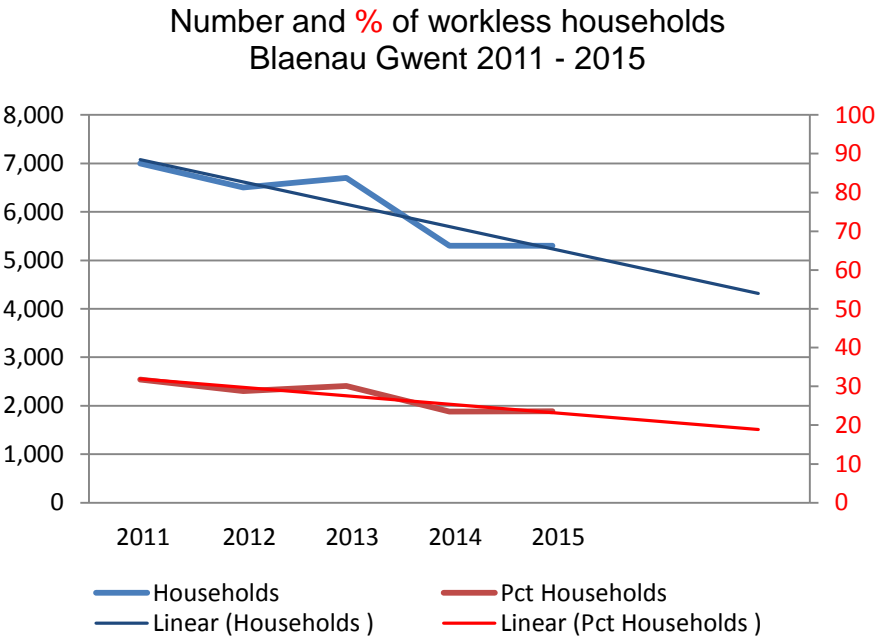


	Blaenau Gwent	Wales
2011	31.8	22.4
2012	28.8	21.6
2013	30.1	19.9
2014	23.5	19.4
2015	23.6	18.3

Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS)

Figure WH04 shows the extent to which both the number and percentage of workless households has reduced in Blaenau Gwent since 2011, from 7,000 to 5,300 and from 31.8% to 23.6% respectively. Based on the trajectory of the recent trend the reduction in workless households should continue over the next few years.

Figure WH04: Workless households by time (projected)



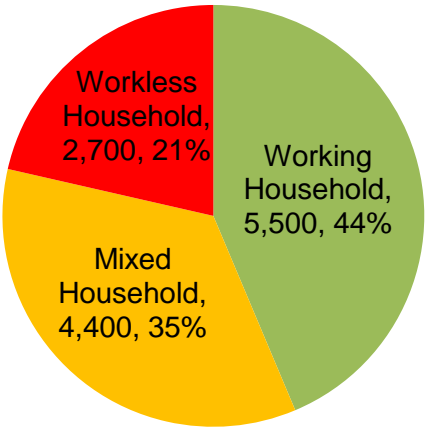
Source: Annual Population Survey

Dependent Children Household Status

Figure WH05 shows the number and percentage of dependent children (aged 0 – 15) per household status in Blaenau Gwent in 2015. The majority of dependent children, 79%, live in a household with at least some of those that are of working age are in employment i.e. 44% working households and 35% mixed. There are 21% living in workless households.

Figure WH05: Dependent children by working household status

Dependent Children, 2015 in Blaenau Gwent Living in Household With At Least One Person of Working Age



Source: Annual Population Survey 2015

As shown in Figure WH06 the percentage of children in the Gwent region living in workless households in 2015 ranged from 6.6% in Monmouthshire to 21.6% in Blaenau Gwent. The authority also had the 3rd highest rate of 22 local authorities in Wales. The overall rate at a Wales level in 2015 was 13.6%.

Figure WH06: Children living in workless households by area

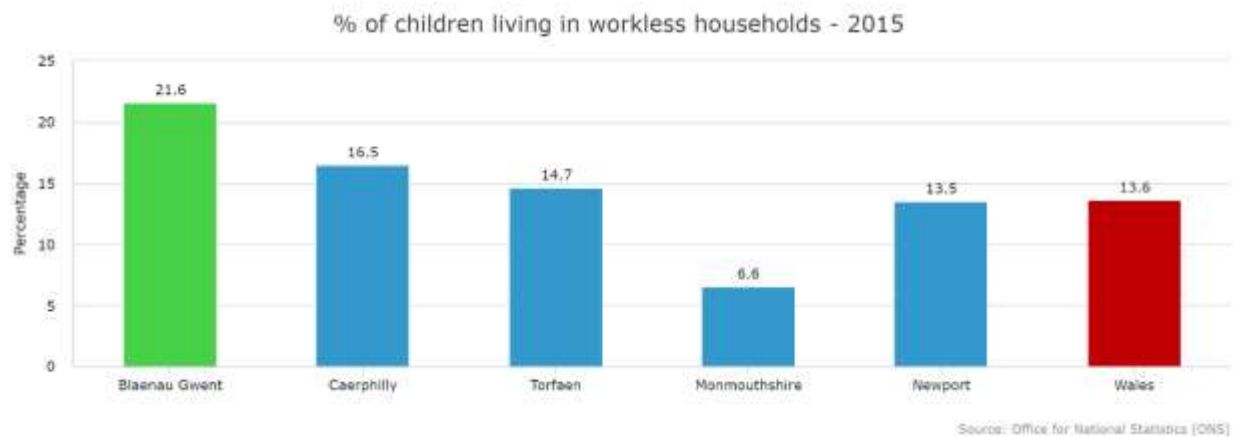
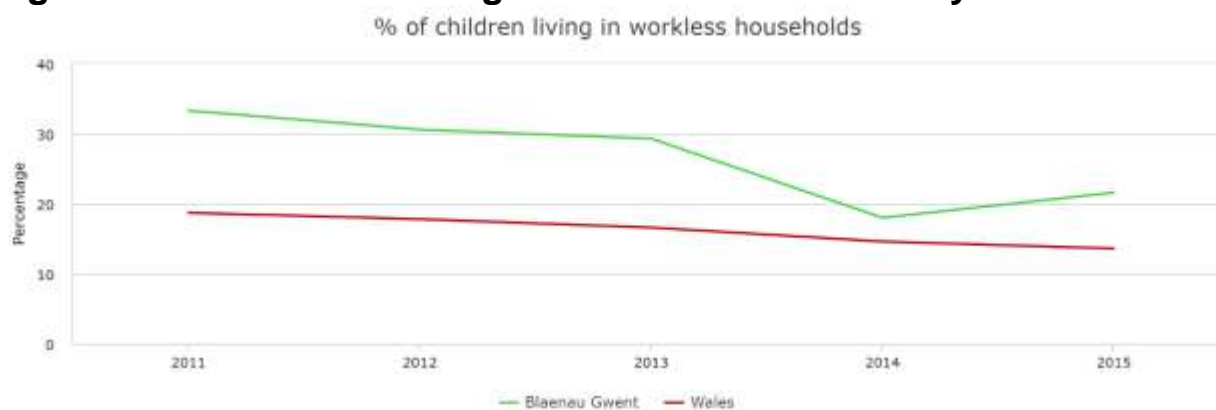


Figure WH07 shows the percentage of children living in workless households between 2011 and 2015. Blaenau Gwent saw a decrease of 11.7 percentage points over the period. This compared with a decrease of 5.1 percentage points for Wales over the same period.

Figure WH07: Children living in workless household by time



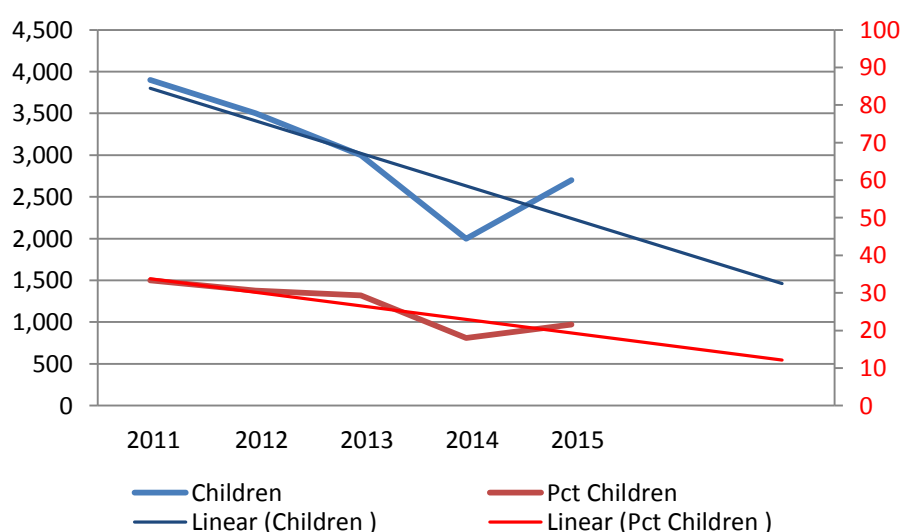
	Blaenau Gwent	Wales
2011	33.3	18.7
2012	30.6	17.8
2013	29.3	16.6
2014	18.0	14.6
2015	21.6	13.6

Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS)

Figure WH08 shows the extent to which both the number and percentage of children living in workless households has reduced in Blaenau Gwent since 2011, from 3,900 to 2,700 and from 33.3% to 21.6% respectively. Based on the trajectory of the recent trend the reduction in children living in workless households should reduce over the next few years.

Figure WH08: Children living in workless households by time (projected)

Number and % of children living in workless households
Blaenau Gwent 2011 - 2015



Source: Annual Population Survey

2.2 neighbourhood area level

Note: *Most of the data in this chapter comes from the Annual Population Survey (APS) which is available at local authority level. However, because of the sample size, data is not available below local authority level.*

2.3 Interpretation of data

The majority of households with working age residents in Blaenau Gwent, 77%, are 'working' or 'mixed' households, where some or all are in employment. The remaining 23% or 5,300 are workless households.

The authority has the 3rd highest rate of workless households of 22 local authorities in Wales and compares with the overall rate at a Wales level of 18.3%. However, 8.2% or 1,700 less households are workless in the authority since 2011, narrowing the gap between local and national levels. The trajectory of the recent trend suggests a further reduction in workless households over the next few years.

The majority of dependent children, 79%, live in working or mixed household with 21% or 2,700 living in a workless household, the 3rd highest rate in Wales. The overall rate for Wales is 13.6%.

However, 11.7% or 1,200 less dependent children live in workless households in the authority compared to 2011, narrowing the gap between local and national levels. The trajectory of the recent trend suggests a further reduction of children living in workless households.

2.4 What are the critical issues for public services to consider?

The critical issues for public services to address are:

- The percentage of workless households. Despite seeing a steep downward trend, the percentage of workless households in Blaenau Gwent is highest in the Gwent region and third highest in Wales.
- The percentage of children (aged 0 – 15) living in workless households. Despite seeing a steep downward trend, the percentage of children living in workless households in Blaenau Gwent is highest in the Gwent region and third highest in Wales.

It is important that the downward trend in workless households and children living in workless households continues so that poverty levels are alleviated, an increase in prosperity is seen with a good standard of living for the household members, and to aid the life chances of children

3. What research exists to help us develop a response to this/ these issues?

Working and Workless Households: 2015, a report released by ONS on 6th October 2015 reiterates the situation seen at a local level in that the broad picture in the UK is one of an overall increase in the share of working households and a declining share of workless households. There has also been an overall decline in the share of children aged 0 to 15 years old living in workless households and that it is proposed that a measure of children living in workless households is used to monitor the life chances of children in an amended Child Poverty Act.

The report also states that the growth in the share of working households in the UK has been partly driven by increased proportions of lone parents working. The share of lone parents who were in employment has risen from 43.8% in 1996 to 64.4% in 2015.

4. Five ways of working

4.1 Collaboration

<i>Adds no value</i>	<i>Adds some value</i>	<i>Adds moderate value</i>	<i>Critical to tackle the issue</i>
			X

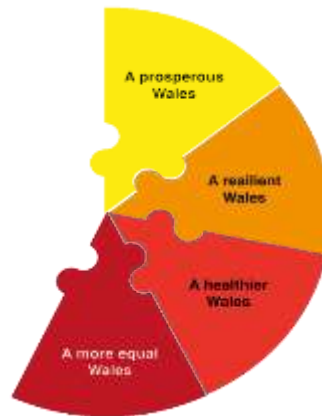
Partnership and ‘cross-PSB’ collaboration would be required to tackle the scale of the economic activity problems identified in this chapter. For example, with local authorities involved with the City Deal investment programme and projects involving the Gwent Strategic Well-being Assessment Group (GSWAG) and the third sector involved in upskilling residents for employment.

4.2 a) Integration – links with themes

<i>Economic</i>	<i>Social</i>	<i>Environmental</i>	<i>Cultural</i>
	X		

Addressing workless households in particular, should contribute to the social well-being of citizens in terms of improved emotional well-being, standard of living including better housing and a reduction in crime levels (for example, studies have shown that poverty is a strong driver of violent offending amongst young people).

4.2b) Integration –Contribution to the National Goal



Supporting Commentary

Prosperous – an economy which generates wealth and provides employment opportunities, allowing people to take advantage of the wealth generated through securing decent work.

Resilient - supports social and economic resilience and the capacity to adapt to change (for example climate change).

Healthier - A society in which people's physical and mental well-being is maximised.

Equal - A society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances (including their socio economic background and circumstances).

4.3 Thinking to the Long Term

Short term (1-2)	The future trend projected from a 5 year base shows the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Decrease in percentage of workless households• Decrease in percentage of children living in workless households
Medium term (2-5 years)	The future trend projected from a 5 year base shows the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Decrease in percentage of workless households• Decrease in percentage of children living in workless households
Long term (10 years plus)	Time span too long to have any confidence in extrapolated data from current trend.

4.4 Prevention

Interventions to increase employment and individuals' ability to access appropriate job opportunities will reduce workless households and increase the prosperity of Blaenau Gwent.

4.5 Involvement

During the 'Blaenau Gwent We Want' Public Engagement Programme people we spoke with did not specifically mention work related households, although our related topic 'employment & income' was very popular with 322 or 8% of all comments we received falling into it. Employment & Income was also the most popular topic when we asked what things are important for people to live well and enjoy their lives, showing how important employment is to people within the borough.

See 'Involvement' in [Economic Activity](#) Section for more details.

5. What is currently being done to tackle this issue?

5.1 Is this issue currently being tackled in partnership?

The critical issues highlighted at 2.4 are currently being tackled by the Thriving and Vibrant Group within the single integrated plan overseen by the Public Service Board. This work includes:

- strengthening and improving access to employment opportunities
- establishing an economic activity group to coordinate activity
- supporting residents effected by benefit caps
- building communities resilience

The priorities are aimed at supporting individuals by upskilling those in employment, in ways which align to existing and emerging job opportunities. The interventions extend to include volunteering pathways and wider interventions around the child.

5.2 What wider assets could assist in tackling this issue?

Wider assets that could be used to tackle this issue include Department of Works and Pensions, GAVO, COOP, RSL's and Wales Co-op.

6. What this tells us about Well-being in Blaenau Gwent

Workless households face multiple barriers to accessing employment opportunities, and there are likely to be long term impacts on children living in workless households in Blaenau Gwent.

Section 4.3: Income

1. Overview

Income can be an important factor in meeting people's basic needs. It can also increase freedom to make lifestyle choices. The level of income is crucial to ensure residents can afford a good standard of living, for example, of material goods, quality and affordability of housing, meeting costs of goods and services and leisure/cultural activities.

The median is generally the mean average used to measure earnings because the mean is highly influenced by pay rates at the upper end and may not be representative of the average earnings of a typical person.

The median is the middle income value and is consequently considered a better indicator of typical average earnings.

2. What is the data saying?

2.1 At a Blaenau Gwent level

This section provides information on income for people working in Blaenau Gwent who reside outside the authority and people working and residing in the authority. It also details pertinent information relating to people out of work, claiming benefits and income deprivation in the authority.

Figure I01 shows that average gross full time weekly pay of residents across the Gwent region in 2016 ranged from £433.90 per week for those who live in Blaenau Gwent to £623.40 per week for those who live in Monmouthshire. This compares to a figure of £498.30 for residents of Wales.

Figure I01: Average weekly pay

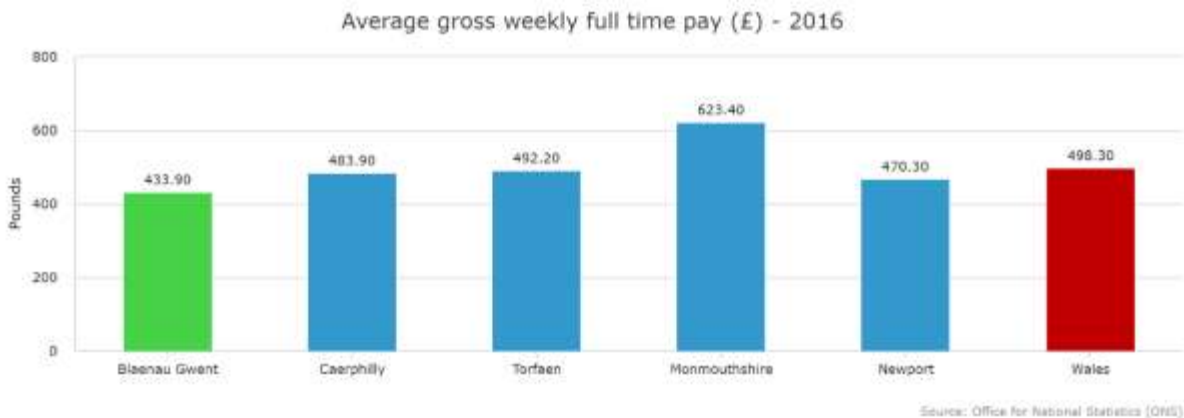
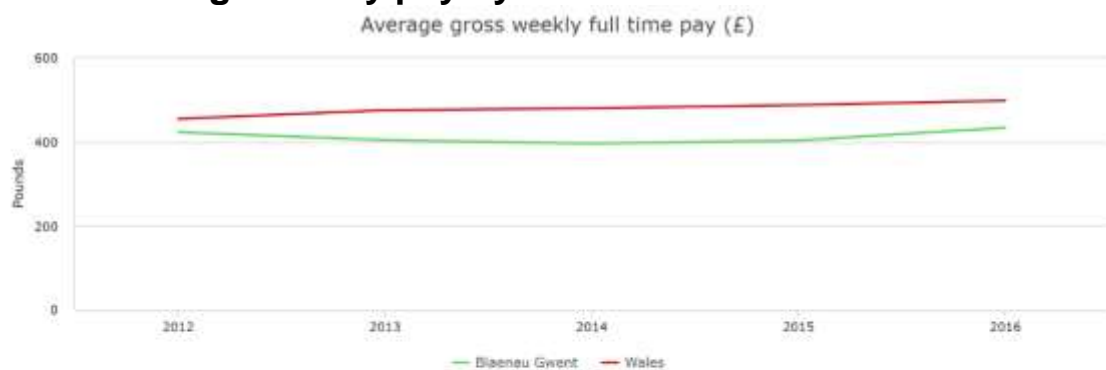


Figure I02 shows gross weekly full time pay over the period 2012 to 2016.

Blaenau Gwent saw an increase of around £11 per week in gross weekly pay for its residents. This compared with an increase of around £43 per week for residents of Wales over the same period.

Figure I02: Average weekly pay by time



	Blaenau Gwent	Wales
2012	423.00	454.90
2013	404.40	475.30
2014	395.90	480.00
2015	403.50	487.60
2016	433.90	496.30

Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS)

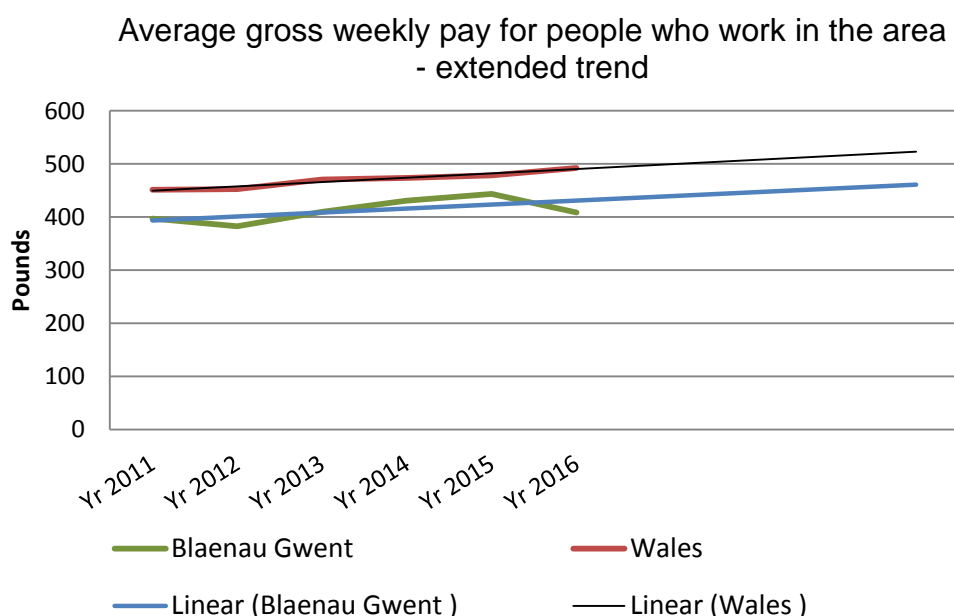
Gross full time weekly pay – work in local authority

The average gross weekly pay for people who work full time in Gwent in 2016 ranged from £408.90 in Blaenau Gwent to £512.70 in Caerphilly. This compared to £492.40 per week for Wales.

Between 2012 and 2016 this increased by £26.20 per week for those who work in Blaenau Gwent compared to £39.90 per week for Wales.

Figure I03 shows that based on the trajectory of the recent trend, people who work in Blaenau Gwent should see an increase in pay, as will workers in general throughout Wales. By 2020 people working in Blaenau Gwent could be earning around £470 which will be about £100 less than in Wales in general.

Figure I03: Average weekly pay by time (projected)



Between 1997 and 2016 Blaenau Gwent ranked in the bottom half of Welsh local authorities for gross weekly earnings of people working full time in an authority. The authority ranked lowest or 2nd lowest in this respect for 8 of the last 10 years.

Children in low income families

The percentage of children across the region living in low income families in August 2014 ranged from 14.2% in Monmouthshire to 30.0% in Blaenau Gwent. For Wales the figure was 22.5%.

Between 31 August 2010 and 31 August 2014 there was a decrease of 2.0 percentage points over the period in Blaenau Gwent compared with a decrease of 1.7 percentage points for Wales.

Benefit Claimants

The extent to which people of working age are reliant on welfare benefits can provide further perspective on local economic well-being.

In May 2016 the percentage of people of working age who are benefit claimants in Blaenau Gwent, at 21.1%, was more than double that of Monmouthshire at 10.2%. The percentage for Wales was 14.9%.

Between May 2013 to May 2016 there was a decrease of 3.8 percentage points in Blaenau Gwent compared to a 2.5 percentage point decrease for Wales.

Benefit Types

There are a number of different types of benefits available to people with different circumstances. The most common are:

- Carer's allowance;
- Disability living allowance;
- Incapacity benefit or ESA;
- Income support/pension credit;
- Job seeker's allowance;
- Severe disablement allowance; and
- Widow's benefit.

The percentage of working age people claiming each of these benefits provides us with information on the number and types of benefits being claimed by those who are of working age.

Job Seekers Allowance

The percentage of working age people claiming Job Seekers' Allowance in the Gwent region ranged from 0.8% in Monmouthshire to 2.6% in Blaenau Gwent in October 2016. The percentage for Wales was 1.5%.

Between October 2014 to October 2016. Blaenau Gwent saw a decrease of 2.0 percentage points compared to a decrease of 1.1 in Wales.

Incapacity Benefit

In May 2016, the percentage claiming incapacity benefit or severe disablement benefit in Blaenau Gwent was 12.0%, the highest in Gwent. This was 8.4% for

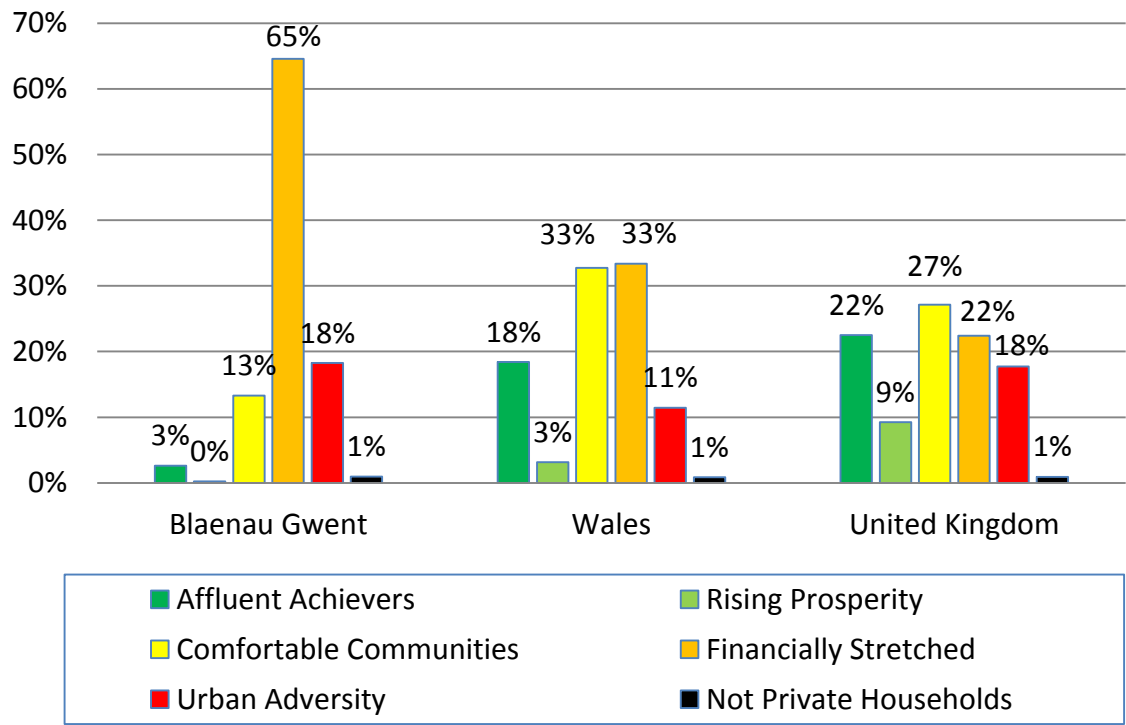
Wales as a whole. Little change has been seen in levels for Blaenau Gwent and Wales as a whole since May 2013.

Acorn

Acorn is a geodemographic segmentation of the UK’s population. By analysing significant social factors and population behaviour, it provides precise information and an in-depth understanding of the different types of people.

Figure I04 shows the percentage of residents within Blaenau Gwent compared to Wales and the UK, that fall into the 6 Acorn Categories.

Figure I04: Acorn Category – 2015 Blaenau Gwent/Wales/UK



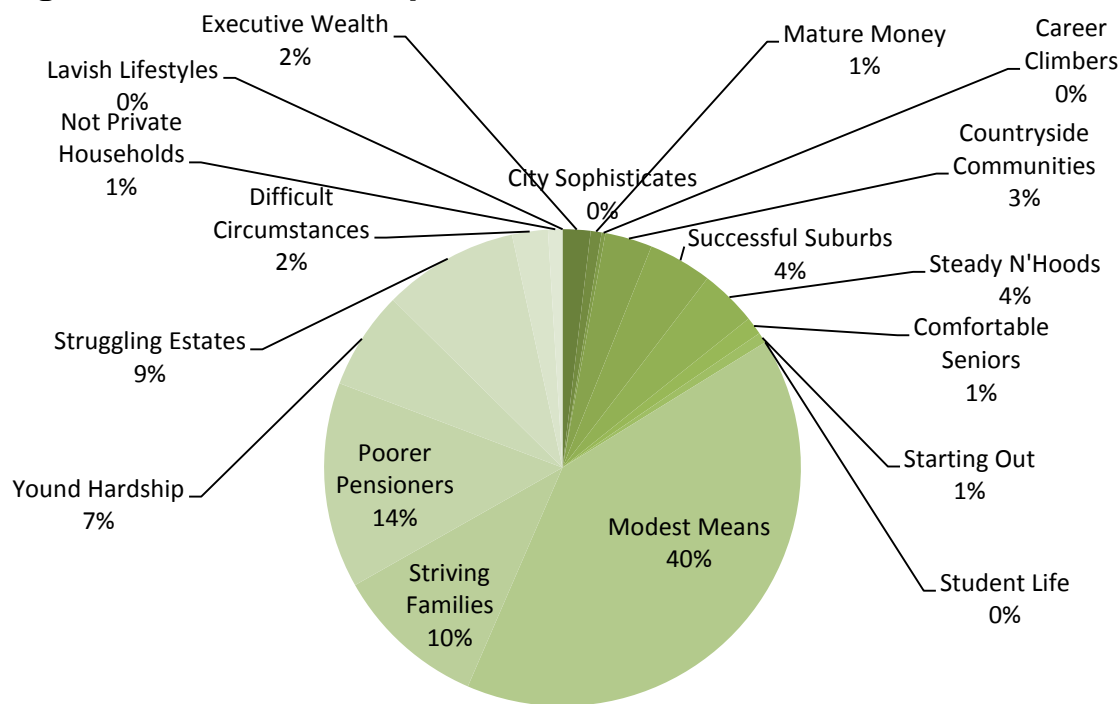
The majority of residents in Blaenau Gwent (65%) fall into the **‘financially stretched’** category. This is almost double that of Wales as a whole (33%) and almost treble that of the UK (22%).

Overall, while many people in this category are just getting by with modest lifestyles a significant minority are experiencing some degree of financial pressure.

Almost one-fifth of residents fall into the ‘**urban adversity**’ category. This contains the most deprived areas of large and small towns and cities across the UK. Household incomes are low, nearly always below the national average. The level of people having difficulties with debt or having been refused credit approaches double the national average.

Figure I05 shows the percentage of residents within Blaenau Gwent that fall into the more detailed 18 Acorn Groups.

Figure I05: Acorn Group – 2015 Blaenau Gwent



The more detailed breakdown by Acorn Group further shows the percentage of residents that fall into classifications associated more with deprivation than affluence, for example, 40% with ‘modest means’, 10% ‘striving families’, 14% ‘poorer pensioners’, 7% ‘young hardship’, 9% ‘struggling estates’ and 2% ‘difficult circumstances’.

For the largest Acorn group, ‘**Modest Means**’, unemployment may well be above average. In addition to Jobseeker’s Allowance the proportion of people claiming other benefits, disability and income support is likely to be above average.

Generally there will be average levels of investments and savings. However, a few people may be having difficulties keeping up with loan repayments.

2.2 At a neighbourhood area level

Income Deprivation

The percentage of the population in income deprivation across Blaenau Gwent LSOA's for 2013-2015 ranged between 9%-14% and 34%-40%. The areas of highest deprivation (34% – 40% of the LSOA population) include areas such as:

- Cefn Golau, Ystrad Deri, Byn Pica, Rhoslan, Ysguborwen in Tredegar
- Streets in the Hilltop and Mountain Air area of Ebbw Vale.

Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) Income Domain

The income domain of the 2014 Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) focuses on the proportion of residents in each lower super output area (LSOA) with an income below a defined level. This is made up of three elements – income-related benefit claimants, tax credit recipients and supported asylum seekers.

The areas of highest deprivation (10% highest ranked income deprived LSOAs in Wales) are LSOAs which include areas such as:

- Cefn Golau, Ystrad Deri, Byn Pica, Rhoslan, Ysguborwen in Tredegar; streets in the Hilltop and Mountain Air area of Ebbw Vale;
- Rassau and Garnlydan area of Ebbw Vale;
- Upper and Lower Coedcae of Blaina
- Roseheyworth in Abertillery.

WIMD Employment Domain

The employment domain WIMD 2014 consists of the percentage of the working age population in each lower super output area (LSOA) that are in receipt of employment related benefits. The benefits included are Incapacity

Benefit (replacing Severe Disablement Allowance), Job Seeker's Allowance (JSA) and Employment and Support Allowance (ESA).

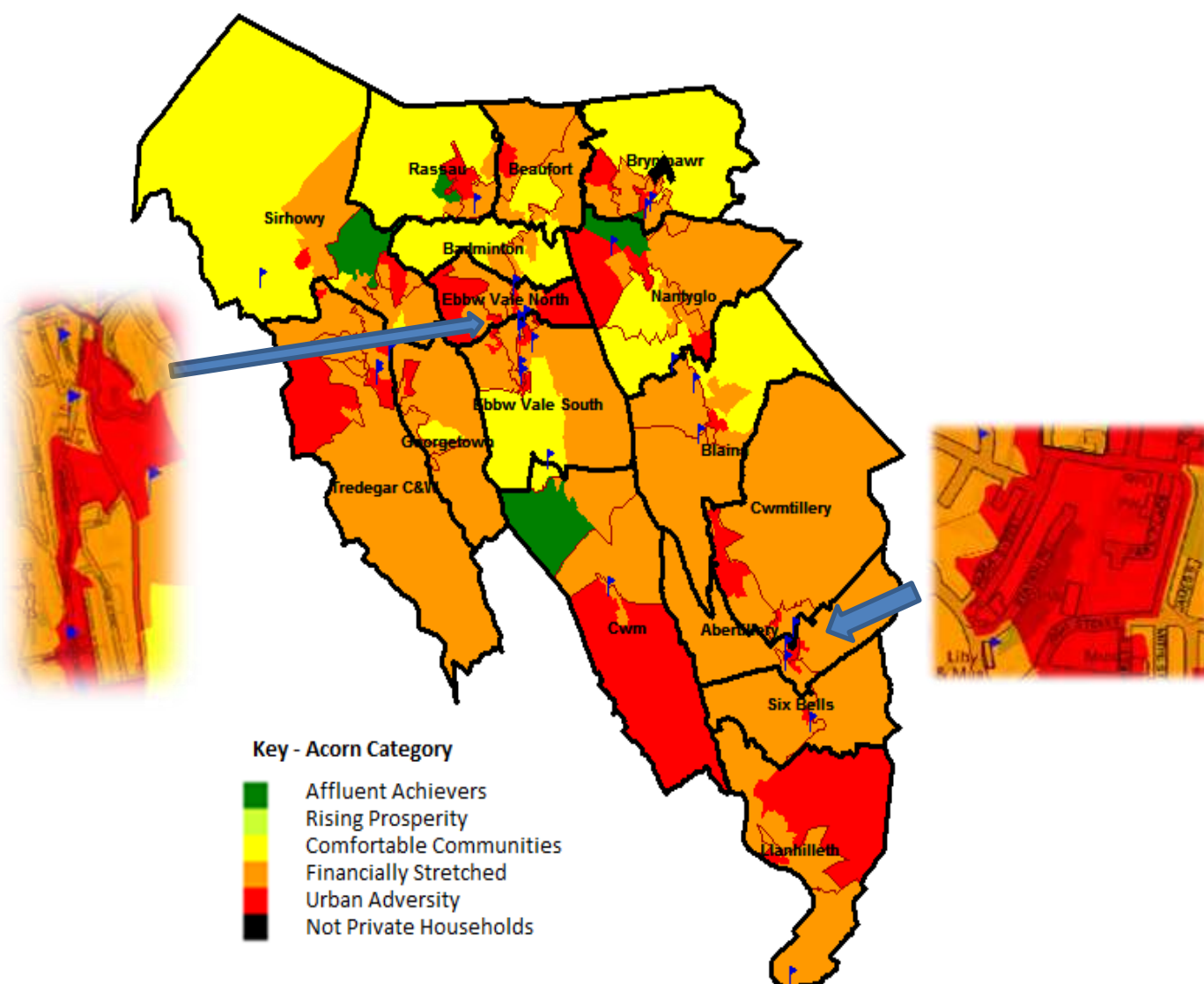
The areas of highest deprivation (10% highest ranked 'employment' deprived LSOAs in Wales) are LSOAs which include areas such as:

- Cefn Golau, Ystrad Deri, Byn Pica, Rhoslan, Ysguborwen, Ashvale, Gwent Way and Town Centre in Tredegar;
- streets in the Hilltop, Mountain Air and Rassau area of Ebbw Vale; Upper and Lower Coedcae in Blaina;
- Nantyglo region;
- Roseheyworth in Abertillery.

Acorn

Figure I06 shows Blaenau Gwent's 16 wards and within these its 241 output areas colour coded by the prevalent Acorn category for its residents. Blaenau Gwent's Employment Support Services, shown as blue flags, are also overlaid onto the map.

Figure I06: Blaenau Gwent Output Areas by Prevalent Acorn Category (2015)



The map shows the predominance of category 'financially stretched' (65% of the population) with pockets of 'urban adversity' interspersed throughout the area. The latter tend to be situated in some of the large housing estates and sections of town centre areas, probably where there are rented housing/flats.

The map also shows that Employment support services which include work clubs, job centres, Communities First, Essential Skills for Adults are mainly distributed in or close to areas comprising prevalence of high deprivation.

Job Seekers Allowance By LSOA

In September 2016 the areas with highest levels of JSA claimants (3.9% - 5.6% of the working age population) in Blaenau Gwent are LSOAs which include the following areas:

- Cefn Golau, Ystrad Deri, Byn Pica, Rhoslan, Ysguborwen, Town Centre in Tredegar;
- Streets in the Hilltop and Mountain Air area, Garnlydan, Pontygof and Newtown areas of Ebbw Vale;
- Beaufort Hill and Twyn Cynhordy of Brynmawr
- Sofrydd area of Abertillery.

Job Seekers Allowance Age 17-24

The percentage of Job Seeker's Allowance claimants who are young people aged 17-24 ranged from 12.4% in Newport to 15.8% in Blaenau Gwent in October 2016. For Wales the figure was 14.0%.

The percentage of Job Seeker's Allowance claimants aged 17-24 over the last two years saw a significant decrease in Blaenau Gwent of 13.5 percentage points. A similar decrease was seen across Wales in general.

Job Seekers Allowance Age 17-24 By LSOA

In September 2016 the areas with highest levels of JSA claimants, 37.6% - 55.6% of 17-24 year olds are LSOAs which include areas such as:

- Queen Victoria Street, Park View, Park Vale and Ty- trist areas in Tredegar;
- Pent-twyn, Brynteg Road, Alexandra Street, Bennett Street, Coronation Street, Lancaster Street, Part Street, Maeshfod, Henwaun Street in Blaina.

Gross full time weekly pay – male residents

The average gross weekly pay for full time male residents ranged from £486.60 per week for Blaenau Gwent to £691.10 per week for Monmouthshire. This compared with £536.60 per week for males who live in Wales and work full time.

Between 2012 and 2016 there was an increase of £50.40 per week in average pay for full time males compared with an increase of £44.40 for males living in Wales.

Gross full time weekly pay – males working in local authority

The average gross weekly pay in 2012 for full time males working in Blaenau Gwent was £504.80, slightly higher than in Newport and Torfaen. This compared to £525.00 per week for males who work full time in Wales.

Between 2012 and 2016 there was an increase of £66.70 per week in average pay for males compared with £43.50 for males working in Wales.

Gross full time weekly pay – female residents

The average gross weekly pay in 2012 for full time females ranged from £402.50 per week for Blaenau Gwent to £514.60 per week for Monmouthshire. This compared to £450.40 for females who live in Wales.

Between 2012 and 2016 there was an increase of £37.40 per week in average pay for full time females in Blaenau Gwent. This compared with an increase of £43.90 for females living in Wales.

Gross full time weekly pay – females working in local authority

The average gross weekly pay for females who work full time ranged from £360.00 per week in Blaenau Gwent compared to £467.90 for Caerphilly. This compared to £448.50 per week for Wales.

Between 2012 and 2016 in Blaenau Gwent there was an increase of £14.90 per week compared with £44.60 for females in Wales.

2.3 Interpretation of data

In 2016 the average gross full time weekly pay of residents of Blaenau Gwent is the lowest in the Gwent region and notably less than in Wales in general. The gap is also widening with the increase between 2012 and 2016 for residents at a Wales level being four times greater than experienced in Blaenau Gwent.

The average gross weekly pay for people working in the authority is less than residents of the authority, a further suggestion of higher rates of pay outside the authority. In this respect Blaenau Gwent had the lowest or second lowest gross weekly pay in Wales for 8 of the last 10 years.

A continuation of recent trends indicate an increase in average weekly earnings for people working in Blaenau Gwent, however, by 2020 this should be about £100 less than the overall Wales level.

In 2016 male residents of Blaenau Gwent were lowest paid in Gwent, male workers in the authority were 3rd lowest. However, pay increases since 2012 have been greater for residents and workers in the authority compared to Wales in general.

Female residents and female workers in the authority are the lowest paid in Gwent in 2016. In both respects they experienced lower increases in pay since 2012 compared in general to Wales. Most disparity is between females working in the authority and working in Wales.

The percentage of children living in low income families in Blaenau Gwent in August 2014 was highest in the Gwent region and more than doubled that of Monmouthshire. Local levels were also almost a third higher than Wales in general.

In 2014 17% of LSOA's in the authority ranked in the 10% highest ranked LSOAs in Wales in terms of employment deprivation, some of which with as much as 34%-40% of the population in income deprivation.

A demographic segmentation of the authority shows that double the Wales percentage of residents are categorised as being 'financially stretched'. A more detailed breakdown shows that many fall into groups associated with deprivation with modest means or are in striving families and difficult circumstances.

A geographical study shows that Blaenau Gwent Employment support services are mainly distributed in or close to areas comprising prevalence of areas with high deprivation.

In May 2016 the percentage of working age benefit claimants in the authority was notably higher than the Wales level and double that of Monmouthshire

Over the last 2 years 2% less of the working age population in the area claimed Job Seekers Allowance but at 2.6% this was still highest in the Gwent region and above the Wales level of 1.5%.

Some LSOA's in the authority have levels ranging between 2.9% and 5.6%.

For those aged 17-24 the level of JSA claimants is much higher at 15.8% locally and the highest in the Gwent region. However, a significant reduction has been seen over the last 2 years with 13.5% less of 17-24 year olds in the authority claiming JSA. Despite this levels range as high as 37.6% - 55.6% for 17-24 years olds in some LSOA's in the borough.

The percentage claiming incapacity benefit or severe disablement benefit in Blaenau Gwent was 12.0%, the highest in Gwent. This was 8.4% for Wales as a whole. Little change has been seen in levels for Blaenau Gwent and Wales as a whole since May 2013.

2.4 What are the critical issues for public services to consider?

- Average gross full time weekly pay of residents (£433). This is the lowest (2016) in the Gwent region and significantly lower the Wales average of £623. Male residents in the borough are paid more than females, £486 compared to £402.
- Percentage of children living in low income families (30.0%). This is the highest (August 2014) in the Gwent region and significantly above the Wales level of 22.5%.
- Percentage of people of working age who are benefit claimants. At 21.1% (2016), this is more than double that of Monmouthshire at 10.2% and significantly higher than the Wales level of 14.9%.
- Percentage of working age people claiming Job Seekers' Allowance (2.6%), the highest in the Gwent region (2016). The percentage for Wales was 1.5%. For some LSOAs this ranges between 3.9% - 5.6% and is particularly high for 17-24 year olds, 37.6% - 55.6% in some LSOAs in the borough.
- Percentage claiming incapacity benefit or severe disablement (12.0%), the highest in Gwent region (2016). This was 8.4% for Wales as a whole.
- Percentage of the population in highest income deprivation LSOA's. This is highest (34% – 40% of the LSOA population) in some areas of the borough.

3. What research exists to help us develop a response to this/ these issues?

Research to date has mainly focussed on information sourced from the Local Government Data Unit and other public domain sources. Further research will be conducted depending on the priorities set by the Public Service Board.

4. Five ways of working

4.1 Collaboration

<i>Adds no value</i>	<i>Adds some value</i>	<i>Adds moderate value</i>	<i>Critical to tackle the issue</i>
			X

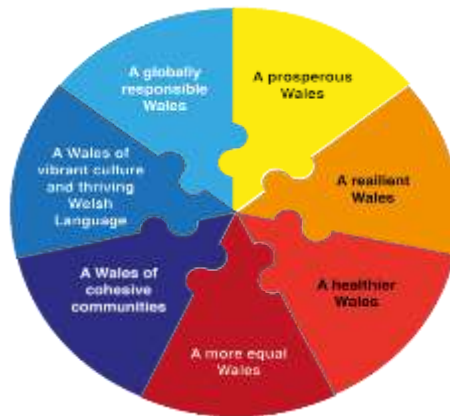
Partnership and ‘cross-PSB’ collaboration would be required to tackle low income issues identified in this chapter. For example, with the Department of Work and Pension (DWP) and Local Authority working on initiatives to address areas identified with highest levels of income deprivation and claimant levels.

4.2 a) Integration – links with themes

<i>Economic</i>	<i>Social</i>	<i>Environmental</i>	<i>Cultural</i>
	X		

Addressing low income should contribute to the social well-being of citizens in terms of alleviation of poverty, improved emotional well-being, standard of living and a reduction in crime levels (for example, studies have shown that poverty is a strong driver of violent offending amongst young people).

4.2b) Integration –Contribution to the National Goal



Supporting Commentary

Exploring emerging employment needs and sectors could help create a range of opportunities at different entry levels, raising local income levels.

Providing a range of support provision across the employment pathway moving people closer to, into employment or upskilling within, leading to increased income levels

Increased income provides individuals and households with more disposable income, reducing number of households who are “financially stretched” and enabling individuals to experience a wider range of opportunities, all of which can contribute to improving physical and mental well-being.

4.3 Thinking to the Long Term

<p>Short term (1-2)</p>	<p>The future trend projected from a 6 year base show the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average gross weekly wage for people working in the authority will increase but at a lower rate than general in Wales <p>Trend data is either not available or has not been calculated for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of children living in low income families • Percentage of working age people claiming Job Seekers' Allowance • Percentage claiming incapacity benefit or severe disablement • LSOA s in Blaenau Gwent ranked in the 10% most deprived of LSOAs in Wales for income deprivation (WIMD 2014).
<p>Medium term (2-5 years)</p>	<p>The future trend projected from a 6 year base show the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average gross weekly wage for people working in the authority will increase but at a lower rate than general in Wales i.e. by 2020 people working in Blaenau Gwent could be earning around £470 which will be about £100 less than in Wales in general. <p>Trend data is either not available or has not been calculated for other measures as mentioned above.</p>
<p>Long term (10 years plus)</p>	<p>Time span too long to have any confidence in extrapolated data from current trend.</p>

4.4 Prevention

Exploring opportunities and enabling initiatives to stimulate local employment will have an impact on local income. Existing initiatives such as Employment Liaison are aimed at maximising employment opportunities that can be accessed by local people.

Understanding future labour requirements/market drivers/key sectors would also provide the opportunity to target training etc. for individuals that would maximise their chances of securing sustainable employment in identified sectors.

Removing barriers to employment could also assist in helping people in accessing employment/increased hours in turn having a direct impact on income.

4.5 Involvement

During the 'Blaenau Gwent We Want' Public Engagement Programme we combined income with employment when analysing all the comments we received. Our 'employment & income' topic was very popular with 322 or 8% of all comments we received falling into it. Employment & Income was also the most popular topic when we asked what things are important for people to live well and enjoy their lives, showing how important a decent income was to people within the borough.

See 'Involvement' in [Economic Activity](#) Section for more details.

5. What is currently being done to tackle this issue?

5.1 Is this issue currently being tackled in partnership?

The critical issues highlighted at 2.4 are currently being tackled by the Thriving and Vibrant Group within the single integrated plan overseen by the Public Service Board.

This work includes improving access to employment, developing better links with the Department for Work and Pensions for those affected by benefit gaps, the establishment of a strategic working group to inform provision and meet need.

Projects such as the Employment Liaison Project and Aspire Shared Apprenticeships also provide opportunities for individuals to assess employment, upskill and achieve an improved rate of pay.

Continued involvement of Department for Work and Pensions, Thriving and Vibrant Partnership, Economic Development Unit, Registered Social Landlords, businesses and learning providers are key to tackling the issue.

5.2 What wider assets could assist in tackling this issue?

Wider assets that could be used to tackle this issue will be explored through further response analysis work.

6. What this tells us about Well-being in Blaenau Gwent

In Blaenau Gwent it is clear that wage levels for the area are low, and as a consequence, people are financially stretched.

Upskilling is essential for people to access better opportunities regardless of their entry point, with training and skills targeted to sectors where there is existing shortage, forecast growth or emerging sectors e.g. hospitality.

Section 4.4: Business

1. Overview

Business is extremely important to the local economy in terms of providing jobs and services for local residents. However, the Blaenau Gwent business landscape has significantly changed over recent decades due to the decline of heavy industries such as steel and coal.

Manufacturing remains a key employment sector within the area, however, a high proportion of jobs are low skilled and relatively low paid.

2. What is the data saying?

2.1 At a Blaenau Gwent level

In 2014, 76.2% of Blaenau Gwent businesses employed between 0 and 9 employees. 19.2% employed between 10 to 49 employees, 3.6% employed 50 to 249 employees, and only 0.7% had over 250 employees.

Figure B01 shows the number of active business for each of the local authority areas in the Gwent region in 2014. There were 1,295 active businesses in Blaenau Gwent.

Figure B01: Active Businesses by area

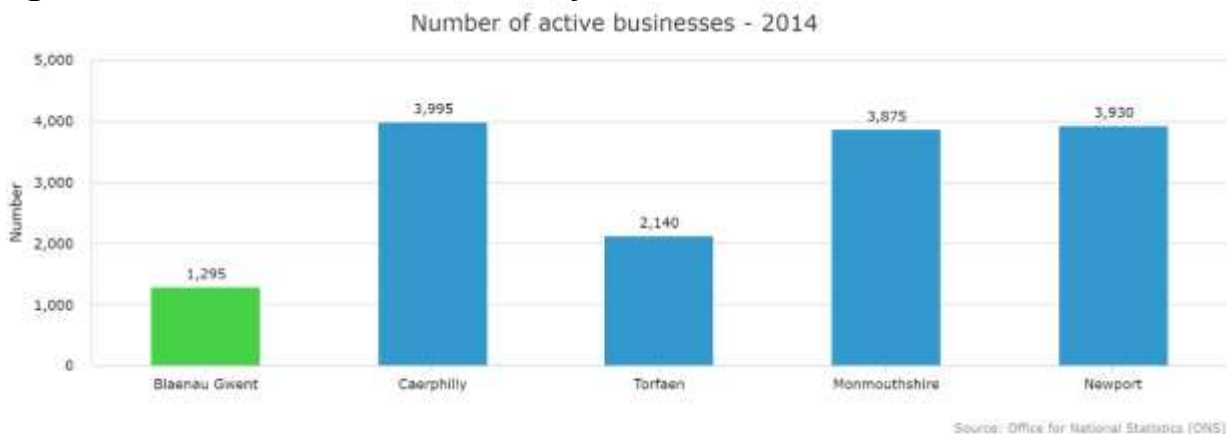
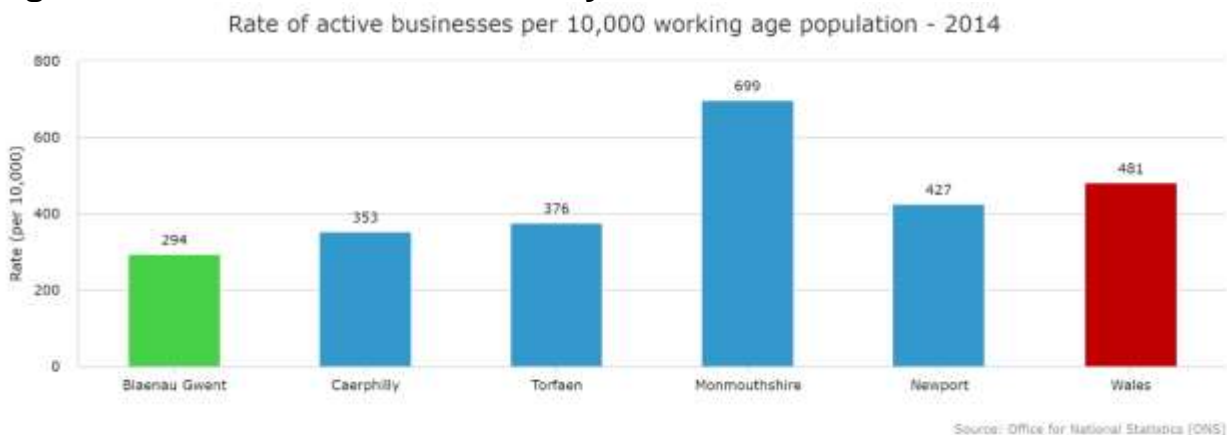


Figure B02 shows the rate of active businesses per 10,000 working age people in 2014. This ranged from 294 per 10,000 people in Blaenau Gwent to 699 per 10,000 people in Monmouthshire. This compared with a rate of 481 active businesses per 10,000 working age people for Wales.

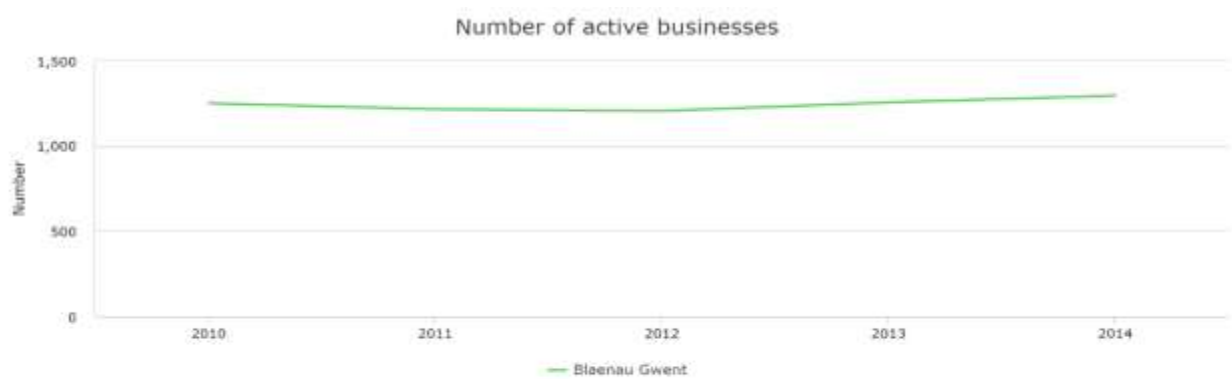
Figure B02: Rate of Businesses by area



Businesses operating across the area are grouped based on the sector within which they operate; the groups include agriculture, production, retail and health. In Blaenau Gwent in 2016 the majority (16%) of active enterprises were in the Construction sector, this is higher than the percentage of enterprises in the Construction industry for Wales (12%). Other prevalent industry sectors in Blaenau Gwent in 2016 were both retail and accommodation & food services at 12% in 2016.

Figure B03 shows that over the period 2010 to 2014 all local authority areas in the Gwent region saw an increase in the number of active businesses. In percentage terms, Caerphilly saw the biggest increase in the number of active businesses at 6.3%, while Monmouthshire saw the smallest increase at 2.1% over the period. The increase in Blaenau Gwent was 3.6%.

Figure B03: Active Businesses by area



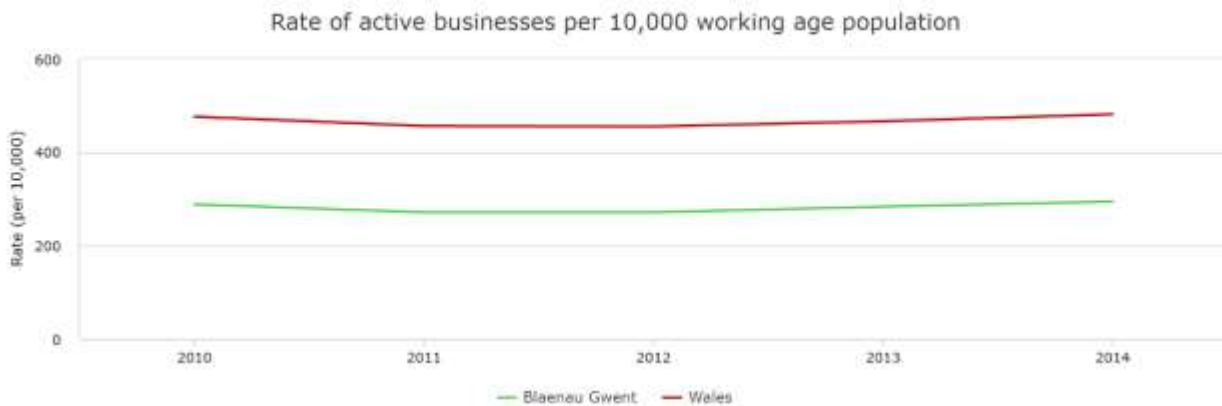
	Blaenau Gwent
2010	1,250
2011	1,215
2012	1,205
2013	1,255
2014	1,295

Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS)

Figure B04 shows the rate of active businesses per 10,000 working age population over the period 2010 to 2014. In Blaenau Gwent there has been an increase of 6 active businesses per 10,000 working age people, compared

with an increase of 5 per 10,000 working people over the same period for Wales.

Figure B04: Rate of Businesses by time



	Blaenau Gwent	Wales
2010	288	476
2011	271	456
2012	271	455
2013	283	466
2014	294	481

Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS)

There has been an increase in the rate of business start-ups within Blaenau Gwent, from 6.6% of total business stock in 2010 to 13.1% in 2013, equalling the SEW average. However, the level of self-employment in 2017 was 7.8%, significantly lower than the average across Wales of 12.9%.

Occupation and Gender

Figure B05 shows the percentage employed by occupation and gender in 2016. In Blaenau Gwent 7.1% of males employed were employed as managers, directors and senior officials. This compares to 11.1% for Wales. 6.2% of females were employed in this category in Blaenau Gwent, compared to 7.0% for Wales.

B05: Employment by occupation and gender

%

	Males		Females	
	Blaenau		Blaenau	
	Gwent	Wales	Gwent	Wales
Managers, directors and senior officials	7.1	11.1	6.2	7.0
Professional occupations	9.2	15.1	12.4	20.5
Associate professional & technical occupations	10.1	13.9	7.7	11.0
Administrative and secretarial occupations	4.7	4.9	15.3	16.3
Skilled trades occupations	17.8	21.3	3.2	2.7
Caring, leisure and other service occupations	5.5	3.9	22.6	18.1
Sales and customer service occupations	4.7	5.8	14.2	11.1
Process, plant and machine operatives	21.8	12.0	5.8	1.6
Elementary occupations	17.1	11.0	10.9	10.9

2.2 At a neighbourhood area level

No data is available below local authority level

Gender

The percentage of males employed in professional occupations in Blaenau Gwent in 2016 was 9.2%, compared with 15.1% for Wales. In Blaenau Gwent the percentage of females employed in professional occupations was 12.4%, this compared with 20.5% for Wales.

For both males and females employed as process, plant and machine operatives, the number of people employed are high when compared with Wales, with a difference of 9.8 percentage points in the percentage of males and a difference of 4.2 percentage points in the percentage of females.

2.3 Interpretation of data

The rate of active business per 10,000 working age people in Blaenau Gwent is the lowest in the Gwent region and significantly lower than an all Wales level

The proportion of active enterprises in the Construction sector is notably higher than the all Wales level. Other prevalent industry sectors are retail and accommodation & food services.

There has been an increase in the rate of business start-ups, comparable to the South East Wales average. However, the level of self-employment is significantly lower than the average across Wales.

A smaller proportion of males and females are employed as managers, directors and senior officials or work in professional occupations than at a Wales level.

In contrast, a larger proportion of males and females are employed as process, plant and machine operatives.

Despite making up a small proportion of businesses, large companies are very important to the local economy, specifically those identified as Regionally Important.

The high level of public sector employment within Blaenau Gwent is likely to fall over the coming years due to decreased public sector funding and consideration of alternative methods of delivering public services. Within this context it is likely that Social Enterprises will continue to play an important role in the local economy.

2.4 What are the critical issues for public services to consider?

The key future challenges for Blaenau Gwent include:

- Addressing worklessness – linked to the poverty agenda
- Increasing the skills base of the existing workforce
- Increasing levels of entrepreneurship
- Encouraging business innovation and diversification
- Supporting the sustainability and growth of existing businesses
- Attracting new investment
- Assisting the development of the social enterprise sector in Blaenau Gwent.

It is important to also understand the future opportunities for the Blaenau Gwent economy such as the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal and inward investment interest from projects such as the Circuit of Wales.

3. What research exists to help us develop a response to this/ these issues?

The AECOM report, along with recent research undertaken in preparation for the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal has concluded the following:

- Public sector organisations need to recognise the challenge in terms of poorly performing local economies
- Existing resources should be reviewed to ensure that they are targeted appropriately and impact is maximised
- Engaging the private sector is critical to ensuring demand led growth
- Whilst there are strengths in some key sectors, support should be available to all businesses
- Supply chain opportunities within the public and private sector should be facilitated and maximised
- Local authorities are well placed to deliver support to local businesses
- A model of regional and local economic development should be agreed

Jones Lang Lasalle (JLL) was commissioned by the Welsh Government to provide a report in relation to the Boundary Review being undertaken for the Ebbw Vale Enterprise Zone (EVEZ) in Blaenau Gwent. The JLL report included an overview of the supply and demand side characteristics for the industrial property market in South Wales and the Heads of the Valleys. The report highlighted the following key issues:

Historically, much of the industrial property development that took place in the South Wales Valleys was largely in response to the demise of the coal mining and steel making industries. During the 1980s, Government Agencies and Local Authorities were active in undertaking speculative developments which shaped much of the industrial stock as it stands today.

During the 1980's to 1990's the Welsh Development Agency (WDA) was instrumental in developing a number of industrial units and stand-alone estates in South Wales. For Blaenau Gwent, the Rassau Industrial estate is one such example of a key employment site developed by the WDA.

Across Wales, the available supply of industrial floorspace has reduced year on year from 2012. This supply-side reduction is combined with little additional stock coming to the market – especially in terms of modern quality buildings. With no speculative development, refurbishment of older accommodation will be necessary to ensure modern stock is delivered to the market.

The above finding from the JLL report raises the supply-side issue of limited speculative property development taking place in South East Wales and the Heads of the Valleys. This lacklustre development climate yields very little in terms of additional stock coming to the market in the form of new and refurbished buildings. These features are consistent with market failures on the supply-side of the property market. This supply-side problem will constrain local economic development. This underpins the rationale for remedial action in the form of National and Local Government intervention.

4. Five ways of working

4.1 Collaboration

Adds no value	Adds some value	Adds moderate value	Critical to tackle the issue
			X

Economic Development takes place at a regional and local level. Collaboration is required across the 10 South East Wales local authorities to determine activity that is best undertaken at a regional level, such as inward investment activity, and local level, such as business engagement and enterprise support.

In addition, effective collaboration with other public and private sector stakeholders involved in business support will ensure that resources are targeted appropriately, duplication is avoided and maximum impact is achieved.

A 'climate' conducive to business development is often created with the participation of various stakeholders. It is necessary to work with external organisations that can help to support businesses. Where applicable, the principle is to arrive at collective solutions to business needs.

4.2 a) Integration – links with themes

Economic	Social	Environmental	Cultural
	X	X	

4.2b) Integration –Contribution to the National Goal



Supporting Commentary

Providing the platform to support sustainable business ventures will assist in enhancing local prosperity for residents through secure, well paid employment opportunities.

The creation of employment is a key factor to achieving well-being and economic prosperity across local communities which will contribute to a more resilient Wales.

Increasing employment should contribute to the social well-being of citizens in terms of improved emotional well-being, raising the standard of living including levels of disposable income, better housing and a reduction in crime levels (for example, studies have shown that poverty is a strong driver of violent offending amongst young people).

Establishing a healthy environment and workforce, together with supporting residents to access work following an absence from the labour market would contribute to the physical and mental well-being of individuals contributing to a healthier Wales.

Those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities.

Strong and positive relationships are being developed between people from different backgrounds in the workplace, in schools public buildings and within neighbourhoods.

Supporting the creation of more secure well paid employment pathways allows for individuals to become more affluent and socially active within their communities.

4.3 Thinking to the Long Term

Short term (1-2)	
Medium term (2-5 years)	
Long term (10 years plus)	The CCR City Deal is a 20 year programme.

The [Cardiff Capital Region City Deal](#) is a major form of government intervention to boost economic development in South East Wales. The City Deal will involve the 10 local authorities in South East Wales working with the Welsh Government and the UK Government to invest £1.229 billion in the region. This investment is set to improve:

- Transport in making it easier for people to access employment;
- Employment and skills to attract new businesses to our region – creating more jobs and apprenticeships;
- Digital connectivity to ensure our region is well connected;
- Regeneration and planning to develop the region and attract inward investment.

The City Deal is a collaborative approach which offers a unique opportunity to transform the economy in South East Wales for our future:

www.cardiffcapitalregioncitydeal.wales

Over its lifetime, it is expected that the City Deal will deliver as many as 25,000 new jobs, and £4 billion of private sector investment across the region. It will help boost economic growth by improving transport links, increasing skills, helping people into work and giving businesses the support they need to grow. A key priority for investment will be the delivery of the South East Wales Metro, including the Valley lines Electrification programme.

4.4 Prevention

Effective regeneration and economic development activity will increase employment; reduce economic inactivity; raise local skill levels; and raise local wages all of which contribute significantly to local well-being.

At a local level, improved economic performance and business vitality will depend on the ability of the area to connect with the needs and priorities of businesses. The Regeneration Division of the Council has designed and developed a 'Business Engagement Framework' to facilitate the process of working more closely with the business community.

4.5 Involvement

During the 'Blaenau Gwent We Want' Public Engagement Programme our theme 'Business' was the 10th most popular theme overall with 169 (4%) comments being categorised into this theme. It was also the 9th most popular theme when we asked what would make Blaenau Gwent a better place (119, 4%).

When we asked what would make Blaenau Gwent a better place our topic 'business development/support' was the 14th most popular topic (62, 2% of comments), 'shopping' was the 16th most popular (60, 2%), 'large-scale development' was the 28th most popular (33, 1%) and 'food service industry' was the 40th most popular topic (9, 0% of comments).

The most common things that people said was that there was a lack of shops and market stalls in the town centres and that business rates needed to be cut.

Respondents in Upper Ebbw Fach (11, 2%) were less likely to say that shopping needed to be improved compared to other areas. Those in Ebbw Fawr were more likely to mention large-scale development (15, 3.29%) particularly the Circuit of Wales project.

Some of the most popular things that people said:



Selection of relevant images from 'Blaenau Gwent We Want' process

"MORE VALUE
IN SMALL
BUSINESSES"
CONSIDER SMALL
BUSINESS & SHOPS

WE NEED TO ATTRACT
INWARD INVESTMENT



5. What is currently being done to tackle this issue?

5.1 Is this issue currently being tackled in partnership?

The issues highlighted at 2.4 do not currently feature within the single integrated plan.

5.2 What wider assets could assist in tackling this issue?

Wider assets that could be used to tackle this issue will be explored through further response analysis work dependant on priority setting of the PSB.

6. What this tells us about Well-being in Blaenau Gwent

- The business landscape has changed significantly during the last 20 years.
- The rate of businesses per 10,000 working age people is below the all Wales average.
- There has been an increase in business start-ups.
- Self-employment rates are below the all Wales average.
- A smaller proportion of the working population are employed in management and professional roles.
- A high proportion of the working population are employed in public sector roles. This presents a risk if austerity measures continue and the public sector continues to shrink.
- Increasing entrepreneurship and encouraging innovation will be vital to the future prosperity of the area.
- Capitalising on investment opportunities e.g. [Cardiff Capital Regional Deal](#) will be vital to support the local economy.

Section 4.5: Education and Skills for Work

1. Overview

This measure focuses on the education and skills levels needed for young people and adults to be ready and able to access employment opportunities as they arise. The working age population of Blaenau Gwent with no qualifications is the highest across the region, which means that as higher level, better paid employment opportunities become available, the people within Blaenau Gwent do not hold the necessary qualifications to be able to access these opportunities. This could continue to impact on unemployment levels, which could have a direct impact on living standards and well-being for the people of Blaenau Gwent.

Part of the focus of this measure is to monitor the number of year 11 pupils who leave school and become NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) as this is where preventative work can take place. The data demonstrates vast improvements in this area but the interventions are reliant on strong partnership working and external funding, much of which is coming to an end. Therefore, it is important to continue the focus to ensure partners continue to work effectively.

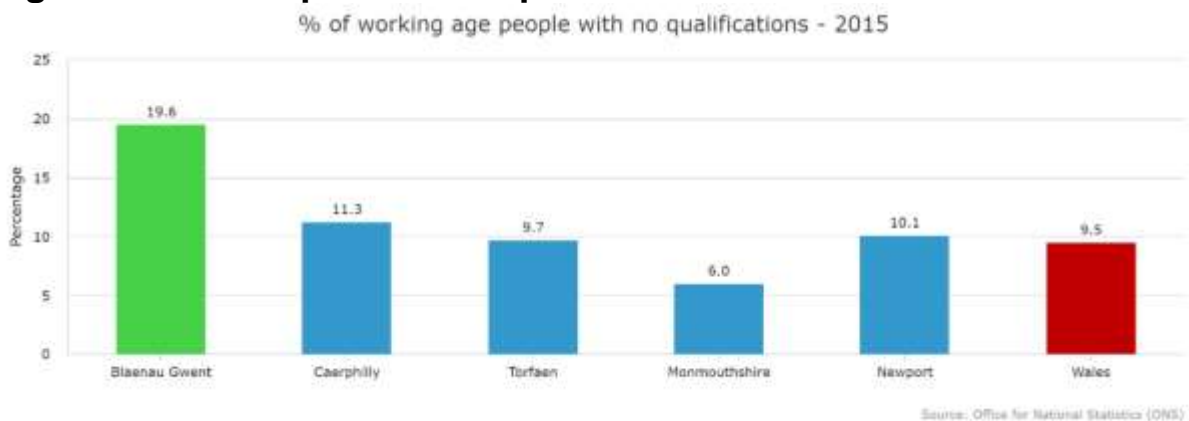
2. What is the data saying?

2.1 At a Blaenau Gwent level

Working Age population Qualifications

Figure ED01 shows that across the Gwent region there was variation in the percentage of working age people with no qualifications. In 2015 the percentage for Blaenau Gwent, at 19.6%, was more than three times that of Monmouthshire at 6.0%. The value for Wales was 9.5%.

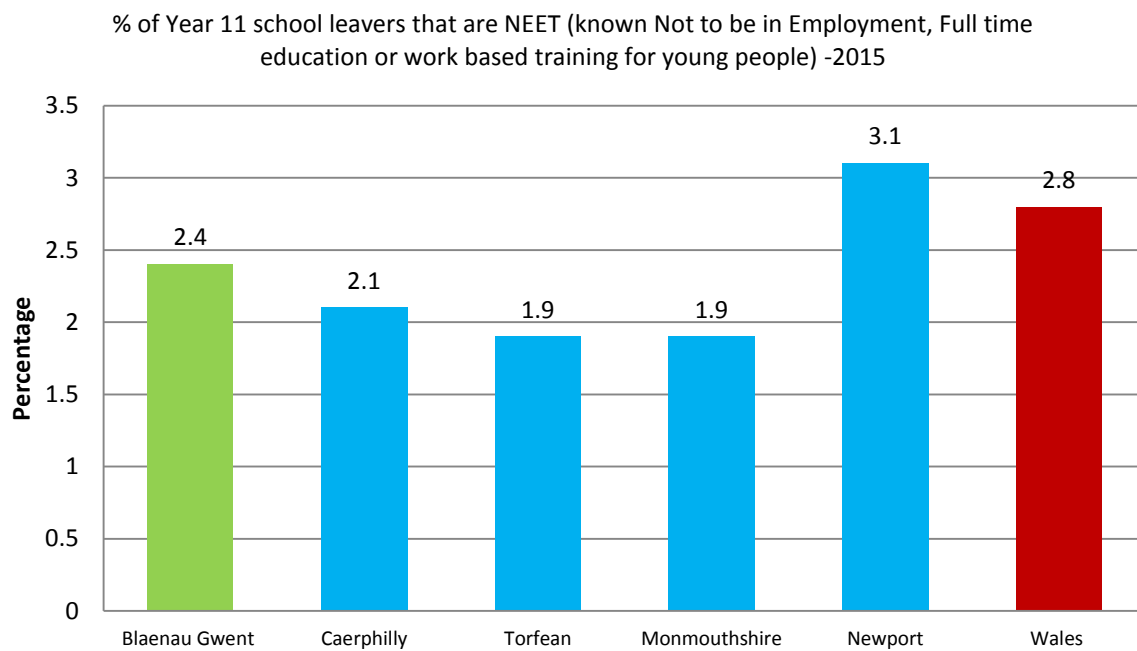
Figure ED01: People with no qualifications



Year 11 school leavers known not to be in education, employment or training

Figure ED02 shows that the percentage of Year 11 school leavers that are known not to be in employment, full time education or work based training for young people (NEET) in the Gwent region in 2015 ranged from 3.1% in Newport to 1.9% in Torfaen and Monmouthshire. Blaenau Gwent had 2.4% school leavers become NEET, against a national Welsh average of 2.8%. This is the lowest (best) ever yet for Blaenau Gwent.

Figure ED02: School Leavers that are NEET by area

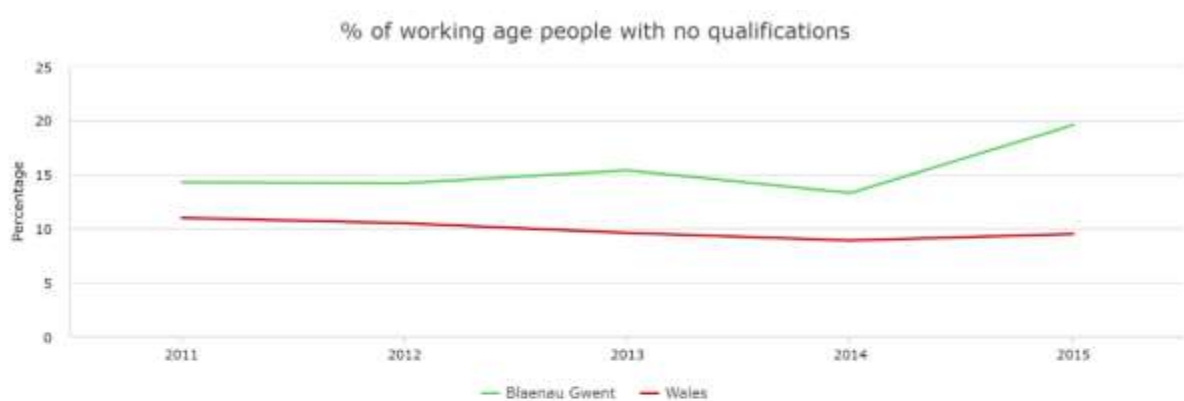


Source: *Pupil Destination Survey, Careers Wales*

We are not reporting on the year 13 data, as originally intended, as the national data collected and published by Careers Wales does not include the full year cohort. It only reflects the destinations of 24 pupils in Penycwm, an SEN school. Therefore, the national year 13 data for Blaenau Gwent is not a true reflection of all year 13 students and this has been flagged up with Welsh Government. Instead, we will use the accurately measured data for year 11 leavers, which reflect the entire year group population. This passes through a series of robust checks between Careers Wales, local authorities, learning providers and Welsh Government before being published. It is this data that we use locally as a measure of our progress and impact.

Figure ED03 shows the percentage of the working age people with no qualifications over the period 2011 to 2015. Between 2014 and 2015 Blaenau Gwent saw an increase of 6.3 percentage points in the percentage of the working age population with no qualifications.

Figure ED03: People with no qualifications by time

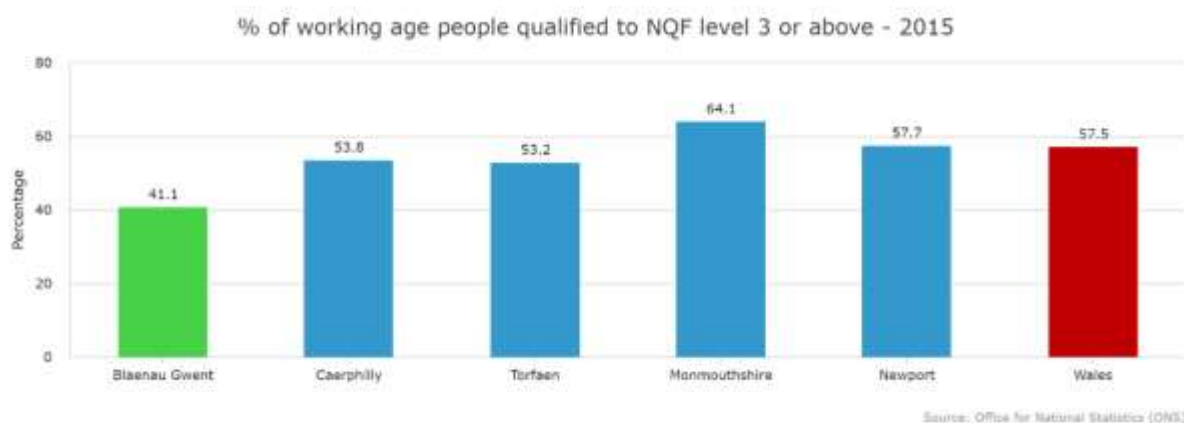


	Blaenau Gwent	Wales
2011	14.3	11.0
2012	14.2	10.5
2013	15.4	9.6
2014	13.3	8.9
2015	19.6	9.5

Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS)

Figure ED04 shows that in 2015 the percentage of working age people in the Gwent region who are qualified to NQF level 3 or above ranged from 41.1% in Blaenau Gwent to 64.1% in Monmouthshire. This compares with 57.5% for Wales.

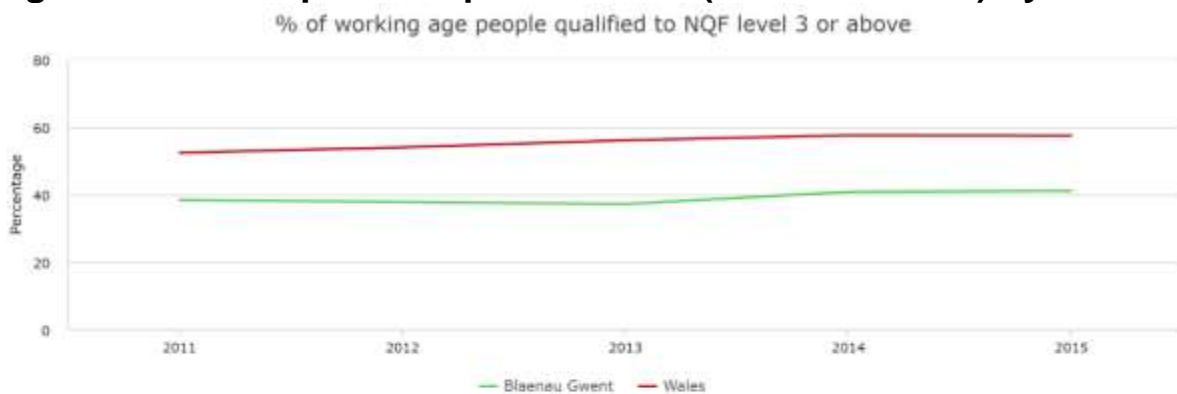
Figure ED04: People with qualifications (level 3 or more)



Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS)

Figure ED05 shows the percentage of working age people qualified to NQF level 3 or above over the period 2011 to 2015. Blaenau Gwent saw an increase of 2.7 percentage points over the period. For Wales the increase was 5.1 percentage points.

Figure ED05: People with qualifications (level 3 or more) by time

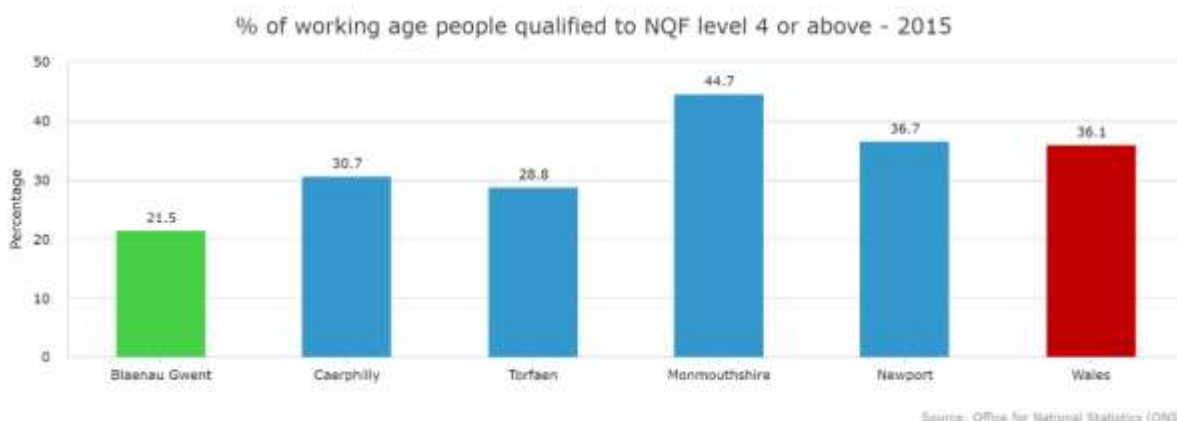


	Blaenau Gwent	Wales
2011	38.4	52.4
2012	37.8	54.0
2013	37.2	56.1
2014	40.8	57.6
2015	41.1	57.5

Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS)

Figure ED06 shows that, in terms of higher level qualifications, in 2015 the percentage of working age people in the region qualified to NQF level 4 or above ranged from 21.5% in Blaenau Gwent to 44.7% in Monmouthshire. The figure for Wales was 36.1%.

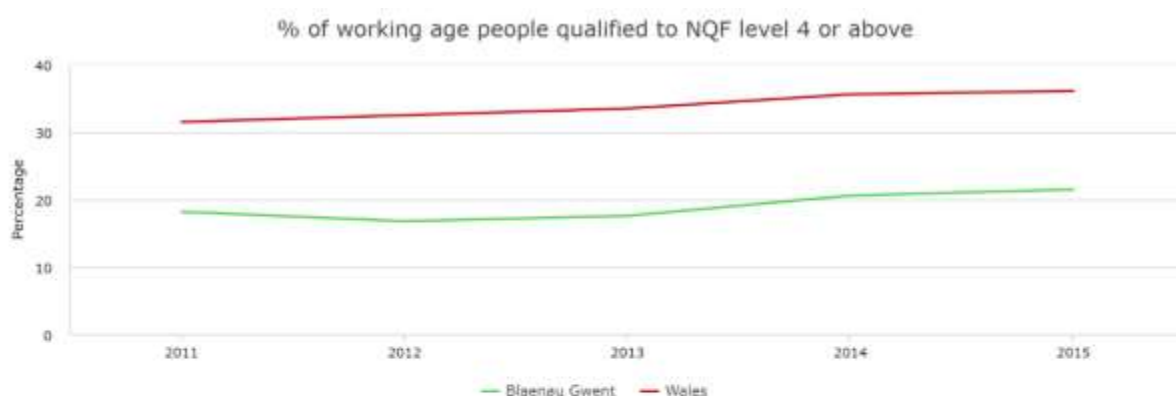
Figure ED06: People with qualifications (level 4 or more)



Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS)

Figure ED07 shows the percentage of working age people qualified to NQF level 4 or above over the period 2011 to 2015. In Blaenau Gwent there was an increase of 3.3 percentage points over the period. This compared with an increase of 4.6 percentage points for Wales over the same period.

Figure ED07: People with qualifications (level 4 or more) by time



	Blaenau Gwent	Wales
2011	18.2	31.5
2012	16.8	32.5
2013	17.6	33.5
2014	20.6	35.6
2015	21.5	36.1

Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS)

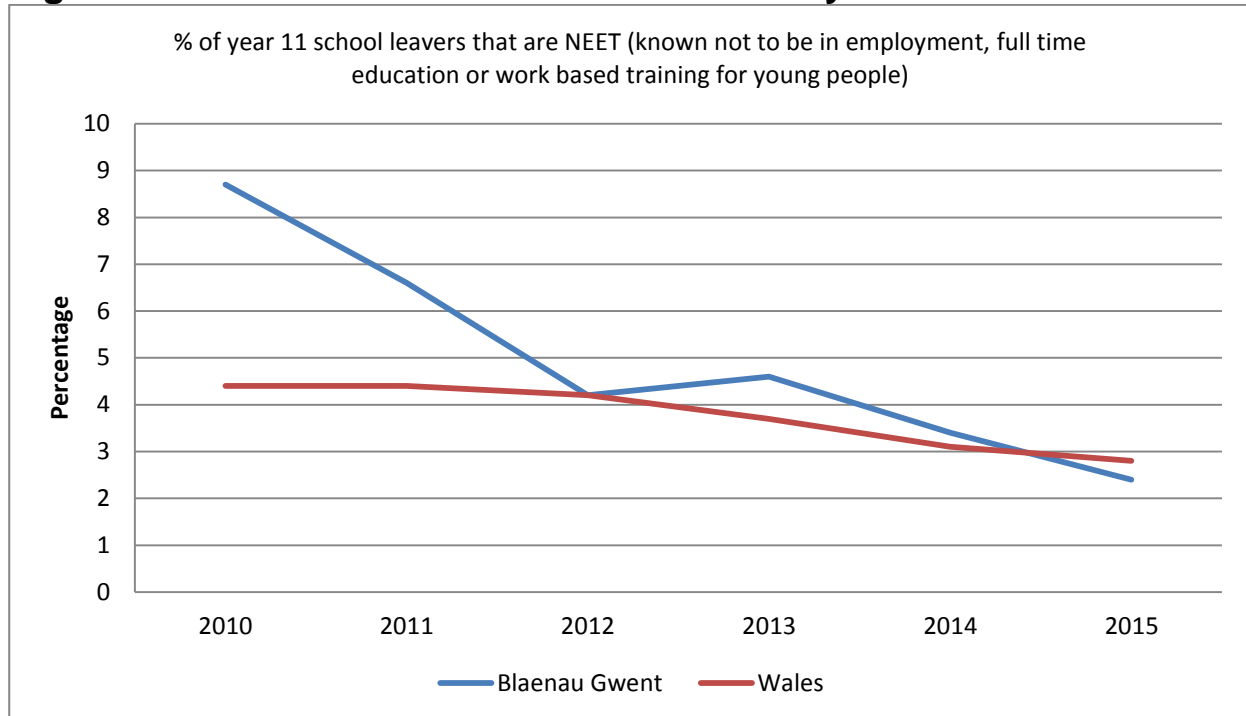
Year 11 school leavers becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training)

Figure ED08 shows the percentage of Year 11 school leavers that are NEET between 2010 and 2015. In Blaenau Gwent, there has been a steady and dramatic reduction in the numbers of young people becoming NEET, from 8.7% in 2010 to 2.4% in 2015. This reduction is due to a joined up partnership approach, overseen by the Raising Aspirations Group (RAG). The RAG is a multi-agency strategic partnership, chaired by the Local Authority, which oversees the implementation of the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework (YEPF), a Welsh Government initiative to prevent young people becoming NEET.

Through the RAG, partners are held accountable, annual mapping of NEET provision is undertaken to enable all partners to address identified gaps. The NEET Practitioner Forum, a sub group of the RAG, co-ordinates multi-agency intervention and support, ensuring all young people identified through the 'Early Identification Tool' are offered timely and appropriate support. The

steady reduction of the NEET figures demonstrates the success of this partnership and co-ordinated approach.

Figure ED08: School Leavers that are NEET by time



	Blaenau Gwent	Wales
2010	8.7	4.4
2011	6.6	4.4
2012	4.2	4.2
2013	4.6	3.7
2014	3.4	3.1
2015	2.4	2.8

2.2 At a neighbourhood area level

Data provided is at a Blaenau Gwent level only. Neighbourhood area level data is available if needed for the Year 11 leavers. However, this requires requesting information from external partners which needs additional time.

2.3 Interpretation of data

The data shows a significant difference in the percentage of working age people with no qualifications, which is more than three times that of some neighbouring authorities.

In addition to this although the percentage of working people within Blaenau who are qualified to NVQ level 3 and 4 is lower than both National average and neighbouring authorities this percentage is increasing year on year.

Note that the data in regards to the Numbers of year 11 leavers that are NEET (not in education, employment or training) are derived from Careers Wales Destination data and is a snap shot of data on the 31st of October each year.

In Blaenau Gwent, there has been a steady and dramatic reduction in the numbers of young people becoming NEET, from 8.7% in 2010 to 2.4% in 2015.

The data also shows in 2015 Blaenau Gwent had 2.4% school leavers become NEET, against a national Welsh average of 2.8%. This is the lowest (best) ever yet for Blaenau Gwent. Although it's only lower than one other neighbouring authority is showing year on year improvement.

This reduction is due to a joined up partnership approach, overseen by the Raising Aspirations Group (RAG). The RAG is a multi-agency strategic partnership, chaired by the Local Authority, which oversees the implementation of the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework (YEPF), a Welsh Government initiative to prevent young people becoming NEET.

Through the RAG, partners are held accountable, annual mapping of NEET provision is undertaken to enable all partners to address identified gaps. The NEET Practitioner Forum, a sub group of the RAG, co-ordinates multi-agency

intervention and support, ensuring all young people identified through the 'Early Identification Tool' are offered timely and appropriate support. The steady reduction of the NEET figures demonstrates the success of this partnership and co-ordinated approach.

2.4 What are the critical issues for public services to consider?

It is clear to see that improvements have been made in this area. However, critical issues for public services to address are still to improve the qualification levels of the working age population in Blaenau Gwent and to enable young people leaving school to reach their full potential. Young people are more likely to achieve their full potential if they are supported throughout transition points in their lives and also have access to sufficient and inspiring training and learning opportunities. These learning routes need to be directly linked to Labour Market Intelligence, so that young people are appropriately trained and skilled to access local, regional and national opportunities.

Currently, the 'support' provided to young people preventing them becoming NEET is through external grant funded programmes via the Youth Service and Communities First. Public Services need to be aware of the impact of Communities First ceasing and the short term nature of grant funding. The Raising Aspirations Group, the strategic multi-agency forum overseeing this work, is aware of and monitoring these issues. However, there needs to be an understanding and scrutiny at a PSB level to ensure that the positive strides made in addressing this area do not fall back.

3. What research exists to help us develop a response to this/these issues?

The Regional Youth Services conducts an annual consultation with young people across the Gwent region. This helps identify gaps in provisions and areas that need changing. Additionally, young people were included in evaluation reports for both the previous ESF funded programme Prevent 14-19 and the Welsh Collaboration Funded Lift Health and Wellbeing Youth project.

As part of the Lift/Codi Health and Wellbeing project, a Health Needs Assessment Survey was commissioned to inform future planning. The survey explored the health and wellbeing needs of young people at risk of becoming and currently NEET and the barriers they face. The survey also consulted with 52 organisations that support this cohort of young people, to identify any gaps in provision but also the barriers that organisations both face and create. The findings of this survey were used to inform the planning of the new ESF youth programmes, Inspire 2 Achieve and Inspire 2 Work.

From the Lift/Codi Health Needs Assessment and evaluations and consultations, young people identified what kind of support they needed and gaps in support. Types of gaps in support identified by young people included:

- Secondary school aged young people – changes in funding youth workers meant that young people did not have immediate access to support in school to help deal with immediate barriers/tensions, which can lead to lower attendance, lower levels of attainment and exclusions. This was addressed through ESF funding being directed to provide youth work support in schools through the Inspire 2 Achieve programme.

- Transitional support between year 6 and 7, year 11 and year 12 and breaks in school i.e. school holidays, is lacking. This is needed to ensure that young people remain motivated to return to school/college/work based learning.

The same support is also needed to support young people who are NEET to transition smoothly into education, training and employment and to sustain their place. This was addressed through ESF funding being directed to provide transitional youth work support through the Inspire 2 Achieve programme.

- There is a lack of curriculum choice for non-academic 14-19 year olds, linked to recent changes in training centre contracts and the loss of the 14-19 funding. Many young people do not progress or sustain their learning due to this lack of choice and timely offer. This is being explored through the RAG and Learning 4 Wellbeing partnership but continues to be an issue.

- Barriers which young people face to remaining in education, employment or training are often about their life factors, such as lack of a stable home, lack of parental support, moving homes whilst in care. There is a lack of support for these issues in Blaenau Gwent, in particular where holistic support is required. This lack of support is impacting on young people's attendance, their levels of attainment and their behaviour, which puts them high at risk of becoming NEET. For 16-24 year olds, young people are either at risk or becoming NEET, due to these barriers. Our mapping identified that this is the greatest area of need. This has been addressed through the ESF Inspire 2 Work and Inspire 2 Achieve programme.

- There is an increase in young people being supported with identified or potential mental health needs. The waiting list for CAHMS is long and there is a lack of support for these young people, which puts them at greater risk of disengaging and not remaining in or sustaining education, employment or training. For those young people who are NEET, if appropriate support is put

in place, they can transition successfully into employment, education or training. This is an identified priority of the RAG and Learning 4 Wellbeing partnership. Both the Inspire 2 Work project and Families First are collaboratively planning to provide support for young people in this area. However, this still remains an issue.

- There is a lack of appropriate employment support and mentoring for young people aged between 19 – 24 years old. This is contributing to Blaenau Gwent's increasing Youth Unemployment figures. This is now being addressed by the Communities 4 Work and Inspire 2 Work programmes.

4. Five ways of working

4.1 Collaboration

<i>Adds no value</i>	<i>Adds some value</i>	<i>Adds moderate value</i>	<i>Critical to tackle the issue</i>
			X

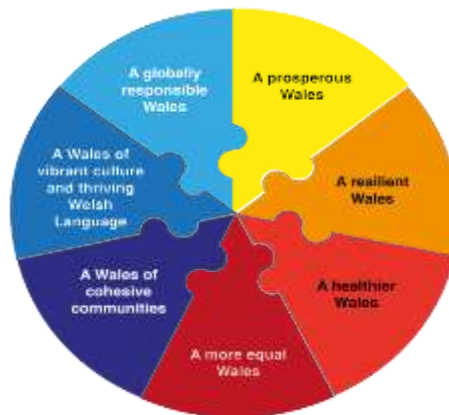
Tackling this issue can only be done through successful collaboration. Enabling adults and young people to achieve better qualifications and to reach their learning potential relies on partners working together to help individuals overcome personal and social barriers. Learning opportunities need to then be geared to meet the needs of the learners (i.e. setting and approach) and also the employers (skills).

4.2 a) Integration – links with themes

<i>Economic</i>	<i>Social</i>	<i>Environmental</i>	<i>Cultural</i>
X	X		X

The Education and Skills for Work measure links with the 3 themes ticked above. Improving the learning and skills of the people of Blaenau Gwent will positively impact on the economy, social and cultural aspects of their lives and that of the community within which they live.

4.2b) Integration –Contribution to the National Goal



Supporting Commentary

Taking forward initiatives to improve this measure enables the people of Blaenau Gwent to be better educated and skilled, and then contributes towards this goal:

Improving the skills level and educational attainment of Blaenau Gwent residents, increased the range of educational and employment opportunities available to the individual including potentially access to better paid employment opportunities. By increasing attainment of the population it also contributes to the attractiveness of an area in terms of inward investment.

Raising educational attainment and skills levels amongst the young people and adults of Blaenau Gwent (including upskilling in work) is key in enabling them to access a wider range of opportunities in terms of higher education and employment.

4.3 Thinking to the Long Term

Short term (1-2)	People in Blaenau Gwent will become better educated and therefore able to make more informed choices about their life.
Medium term (2-5 years)	Through better education, people will be able to access and sustain higher level and better paid jobs, improving their own wellbeing but also that of their families and their community
Long term (10 years plus)	A better qualified, higher paid population can lead to healthier lives and better quality of life for the entire population of Blaenau Gwent.

4.4 Prevention

It is well documented how a low qualified adult population and low aspiring youth population can lead to poor lifestyle choices and unhealthy relationships, which is costly for all public services. By investing in improving the education and skills of the population, this will lead to healthier lifestyle choices and lead to less reliance on public services, potentially vastly reducing the costs associated.

4.5 Involvement

During the 'Blaenau Gwent We Want' Public Engagement Programme there was limited feedback on education specifically for work. However, 17 comments could be directly attributed; these were about the need for more apprenticeships, work placements and volunteering roles as a gateway to employment. Almost half (8) of these comments were from people we engaged with in the Sirhowy Valley.

Our theme 'Education & Skills' in general was the 8th most popular overall with 197 (5%) of comments. It was also the 6th most popular theme when we asked what things are important for people to live well and enjoy their lives showing that Education & Skills are vitally important for our residents.

Examples of comments we received:

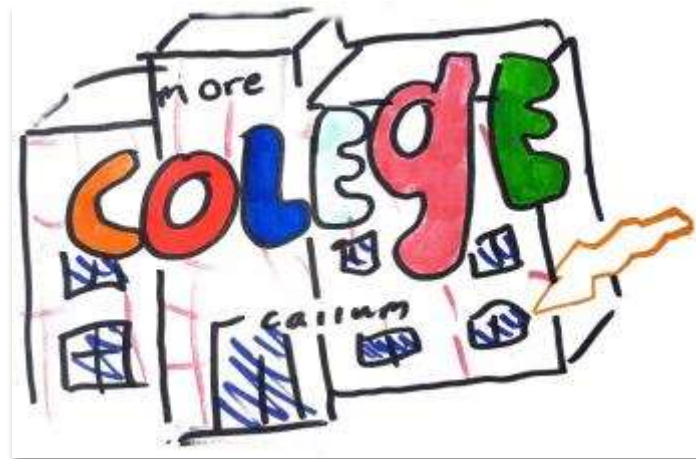


"More apprenticeships as a route to employment"



"More opportunities to learn employability skills - painting & decorating; bricklaying etc."

Selection of relevant images from 'Blaenau Gwent We Want' process



See the associated section [Educational Outcomes for Children and Young People](#) in the Social Well-being Chapter for related information.

5. What is currently being done to tackle this issue?

5.1 Is this issue currently being tackled in partnership?

The critical issues highlighted at 2.4 are currently being explored jointly by Learning group and the Thriving and Vibrant Group within the single integrated plan overseen by the PSB. This includes developing a better understanding of key labour market pathways and employer needs locally, to consider how to influence any change in curriculum choice development.

5.2 What wider assets could assist in tackling this issue?

Wider assets that could be used to tackle this issue will be explored through further response analysis work dependant on priority setting of the PSB.

6. What this tells us about Well-being in Blaenau Gwent

This area is progressing well but is hugely reliant on effective partnership working. The Local Authority's Youth Service co-ordinates the Welsh Government's 'Youth Engagement and Progression Framework' through a strategic multi-agency partnership the Raising Aspirations Group (RAG). The partnership is mature and effective and continues to address all 6 key areas of the Framework. This includes using the Early Identification Tool (4th year), updating the provision map for the Youth Guarantee (4th year), updating the online directory of support (3rd year), further developing the 'lead worker' role and further refining the tracking and support of young people. All areas of the Blaenau Gwent action plan are developing well and are either met or are on track. Formalised links have been established between the RAG and the Learning 4 Wellbeing Partnership, to ensure the learning and gaps identified by the RAG are escalated appropriately.

As a result of this co-ordinated approach with partners, there has been a steady reduction of numbers of young people becoming NEET. From 8.7% (74 young people) in 2009/10 to 6.6% (51 young people) in 2010/11 to 4.2% (33 young people) in 2011/12, to 4.6% (34 young people) in 2012/13, to 3.4% (25 young people) in 2013/14 and finally to 2.4% (16 young people) in 2014/15, the lowest yet in Blaenau Gwent. Unpublished figures for 2015/16 are 2.49%. Co-ordinating lead worker support through the NEET Practitioner Forum has been crucial to this success.

Research shows that preventing young people from becoming NEET makes it more likely that they will live healthier, happier and wealthier lives. Equally, research also shows that the cost of supporting a young person at risk of becoming or currently NEET is substantially more cost effective than the cost of public services for an adult who was NEET as a young person, due to their additional needs that develop over time and need addressing.

Section 4.6: Travel to Work

1. Overview

Travel to work or commuting patterns refer to residents working in their home area, total people working in an area (including non-residents), and people commuting in and out of an area. There is also the matter of how far workers commute and where they commute from and to.

Commuting is highly important in terms of the way people spend their time, in influencing the level of carbon emissions and a reflection of state of the local economy. Having a better understanding of these facets of commuting and how they relate to each other help groups such as transport planners and employers take informed policy decisions on transport infrastructure and recruitment strategies

2. What is the data saying?

2.1 At a Blaenau Gwent level

Figure TW01 shows the average distance commuted to work on 27 March 2011. Across the local authority areas in the Gwent region, this ranged from 13.4km in Torfaen to 21.9km in Monmouthshire. In Blaenau Gwent, the average distance commuted to work was 15.3km. This compared with an average of 16.7km for Wales.

Figure TW01: Average Commuting Distance

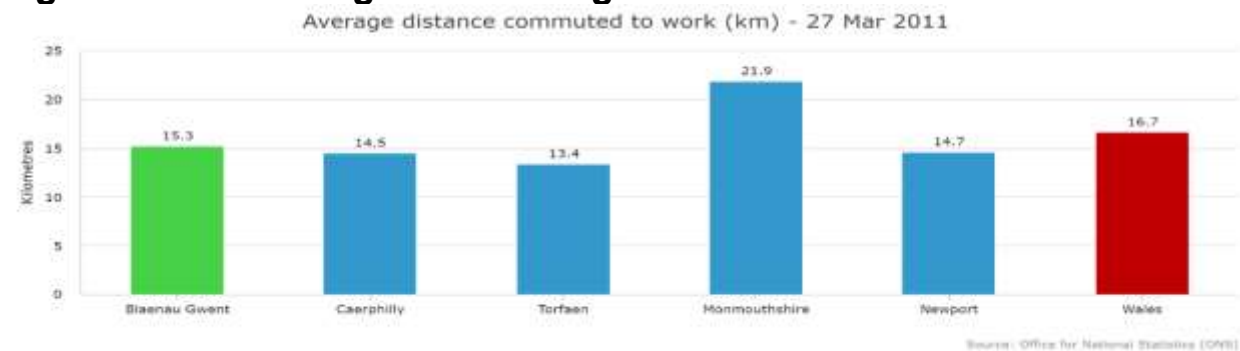
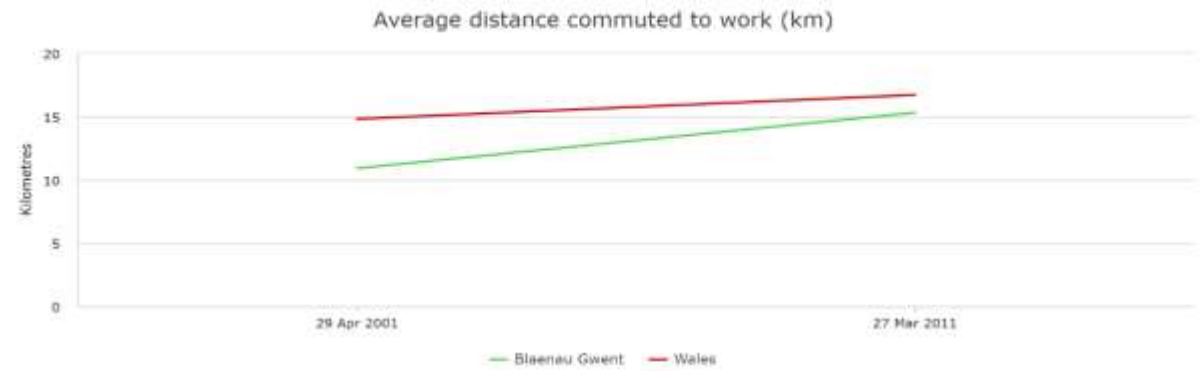


Figure TW02 shows the average distance commuted to work over the period 29 April 2001 to 27 March 2011. It shows that the average distance has increased for both Blaenau Gwent and Wales with increases of 4.4km and 1.9km respectively. This represents the biggest relative increase in average commuting distance (by 40.1%) of 22 local authorities (12.6% for Wales) and the 5th highest in the whole of England and Wales.

Figure TW02: Average Commuting Distance by time



	Blaenau Gwent	Wales
29 Apr 2001	10.9	14.8
27 Mar 2011	15.3	16.7

Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS)

Total Travel Distance

Figure TW03 shows that between 2001 and 2011 the total distance travelled to work (Blaenau Gwent workers aged 16-74) increased from 2.5 million km to 3.7 million km, just over a 50% increase (the biggest relative increase in Wales).

Over the same period there was an increase of 1,808 commuters, from 22,809 to 24,617. This represents an increase of almost 8% commuters in Blaenau Gwent. For Wales, this was a 23% increase in overall travelling distance involving over 1.1 million commuters. There are obvious environmental issues associated with the additional commuting such as increased carbon footprint and air pollution.

Figure TW03: Travel to Work Summary for Blaenau Gwent

Travel to Work, Blaenau Gwent Residents (workers aged 16-74)	2001	2011	absolute change 2001-2011	% change 2001-2011
Total distance (km) commuted to work	248,846	376,347	127,501	51.2
Number of residents commuting to work	22,809	24,617	1,808	7.9
Average distance commuted to work (km)	10.9	15.3	4.4	40.1

Source: <http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/>

Working Residents

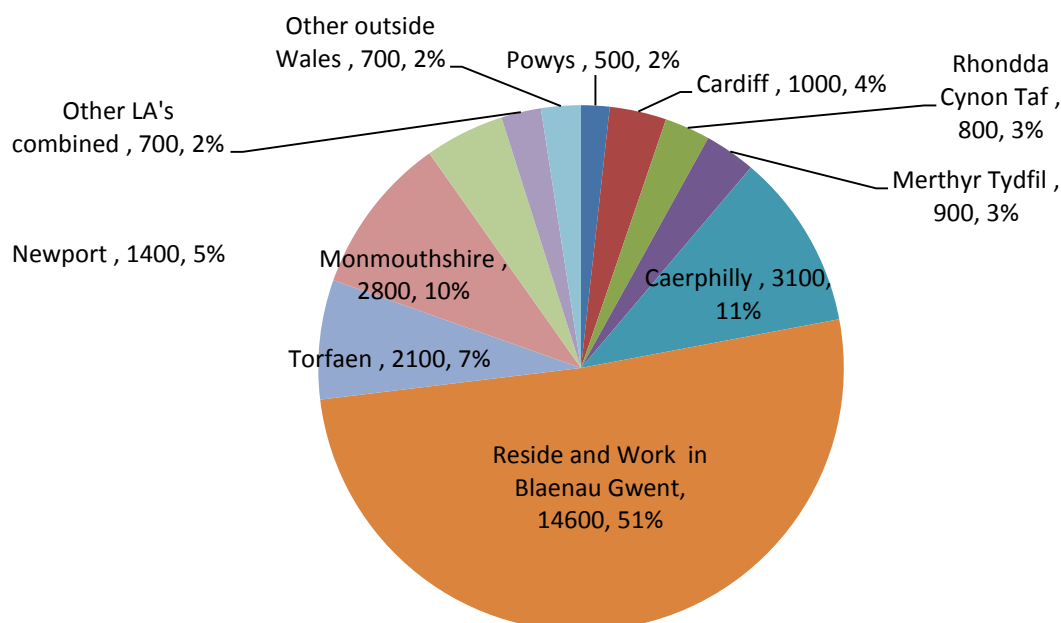
Out of the 28,600 working residents in Blaenau Gwent in 2015, 14,000 or 49% commuted out of the area. This is the third highest percentage in Wales and only slightly below the level witnessed in Vale of Glamorgan (52%) and Caerphilly (51%), which are both neighbouring local authorities to Cardiff. The average commute out of an area in Wales was 32%.

Destination of Working Residents

Figure TW04 shows further detail relating to the destination of working residents of Blaenau Gwent in 2015. Caerphilly, Monmouthshire and Torfaen are the main destinations of Blaenau Gwent commuters travelling outside of the authority, accounting for 11%, 10% and 7% of commuters respectively. Cities as a destination account for a relatively low number of Blaenau Gwent commuters. Only 5% travel to Newport and 4% to Cardiff, while numbers for Swansea are too low to report due to sample error margins (and is grouped with 'Other LA's combined').

Figure TW04: Working Residents Work Areas

Working Residents of Blaenau Gwent, 2015



Out of the 20,100 people working in Blaenau Gwent in 2015, 5,500 or 27% commute into the authority. This is the thirteenth highest percentage in Wales and equal to the average commute into a local authority for Wales.

Working Residents and Workers in Blaenau Gwent

Figure TW05 shows the commuting pattern for Blaenau Gwent, between 2001 and 2015.

The number of working residents increased from 25,700 in 2011 to 28,600 in 2015, with year on year increases over this period. However, little relative change, a 2% increase, has been seen long term since 2001 when there were 28,000 working residents in Blaenau Gwent.

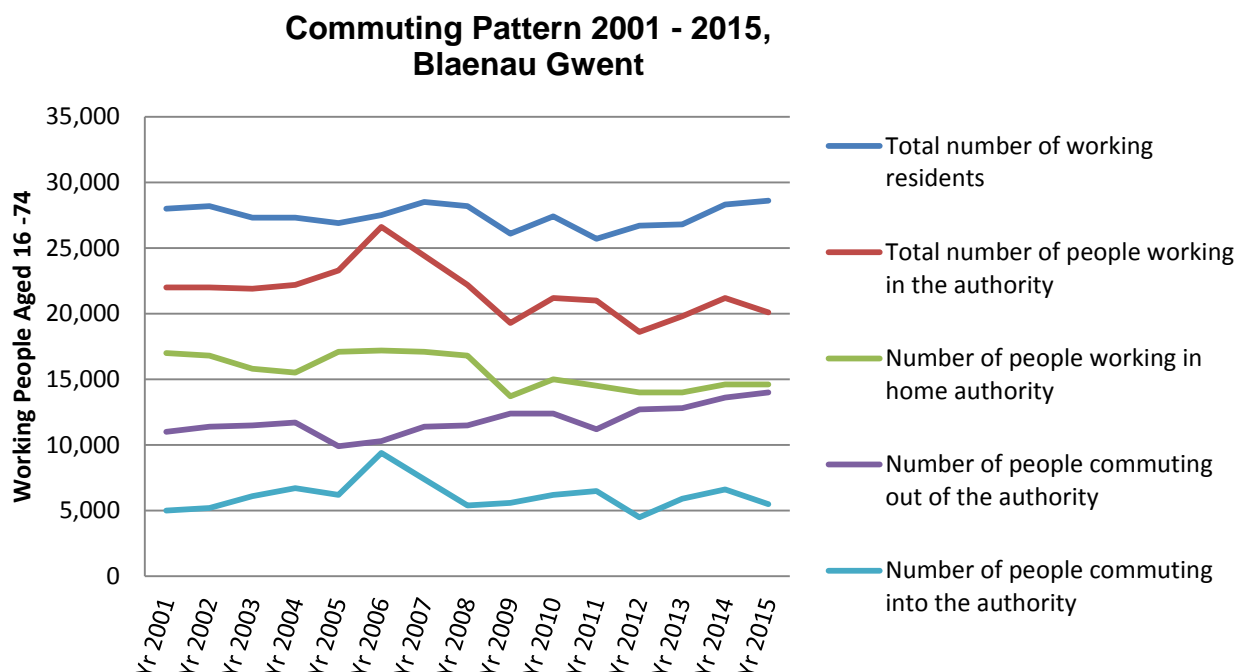
In contrast, a notable change in commuting patterns has been seen over this period but particularly since 2006. At this time the total number of people working in the authority experienced a sudden peak to over 26,000 people. Following this a downward trend continued to 2015 leaving just over 20,000 working in the authority.

Patterns show a downward trend in people commuting into the area and an upward trend in people commuting out. This infers less employment availability in Blaenau Gwent resulting in particular, a 3,000 increase in commuters out of the area since 2001. In 2015 this represents almost half of the resident workforce.

If current trends continue, the number of working residents will show a modest increase achieved by an increased number having to commute out of the authority. This will mean that more residents commute out of the authority than work in it. However, cities account for a relatively low number of Blaenau Gwent commuters with only 5% travelling to Newport and 4% to Cardiff.

A continuation of current trends also means a decline in the number of people commuting into the authority contributing to a further decline in the total number of people working in the authority.

Figure TW05: Commuting Patterns



Source: ONS Annual Population Survey

2.2 At a neighbourhood area level

Travel to work data is not available at a neighbourhood level or geographies below this.

2.3 Interpretation of data

Even though the average distance commuted to work in Blaenau Gwent in 2011 was slightly less than the Wales average Blaenau Gwent commuters experienced the biggest percentage increase in commuting distance between 2001 and 2011 in Wales and the 5th highest of all local authorities in England and Wales.

In 2015 almost half of working residents in Blaenau Gwent commuted out of the authority, the third highest in Wales. The main destinations were Caerphilly, Monmouthshire and Torfaen with cities attracting a relatively small percentage of the authority's commuters. In 2015 commuters into the authority accounted for less than a third of people working in Blaenau Gwent, which is equal to the average commute into an authority in Wales.

A significant fall in the number of people working in the authority has been seen since 2006 with less people commuting in and more people commuting out of the authority, which infers less availability of employment locally. The less skilled, in particular are likely to have suffered as a consequence of this as the quantity and quality of jobs available locally is of particular importance for low skilled people. This is due to their more skilled counterparts being able to travel further afield to access better jobs as well as securing a share of local jobs.

The number of working residents of Blaenau Gwent in 2015 is similar to that of 2001, achieving this by an increased number of commuters outside the authority, generally having to travel further for work.

If current trends continue there will be a modest increase in working residents but with more than half of these having to commute out of the authority. There will also be further decreases in the number of people working in the area with a reduction of incoming commuters.

2.4 What are the critical issues for public services to consider?

- Job availability in Blaenau Gwent for the less skilled – the total number of people working in the authority decreased from 26,000 in 2006 to 20,000 in 2015. Low skilled/qualified residents are most likely to suffer from the low quantity and quality of jobs available locally.
- Training opportunities for the low skilled/qualified residents - those with poor skills have fewer opportunities and face more constraints in the labour market.
- Overall travel to work distance – there are obvious environmental issues associated with the additional commuting such as increased carbon footprint and air pollution. This is particularly pertinent in light of Blaenau Gwent having the highest proportion (83.3%) in England and Wales of people travelling to work via 'car/van/taxi/motorcycle'. Between 2001 and 2011 the total distance travelled to work increased from 2.5 million km to 3.7 million km, just over a 50% increase (the biggest relative increase in Wales). Over the same period there was an increase of 1,808 commuters, from 22,809 to 24,617, an increase of almost 8%.

3. What research exists to help us develop a response to this/ these issues?

The 2011 Census Analysis - Method of Travel to Work in England and Wales Report shows that Blaenau Gwent had the highest proportion (83.3%) in England and Wales of people travelling to work via 'car/van/taxi/motorcycle' (as opposed to public transport, cycling, walking, working from home). In Wales as a whole 75.2% of workers travelled by 'car/van/taxi/motorcycle'.

Source: ONS 2011 Census Analysis - Method of Travel to Work in England and Wales Report (2013)

The geography of poor skills and access to work, Joseph Rowntree Foundation report concludes that:

- Both people- and place-based factors influence participation in work: people with no qualifications are less likely to be in work than those with higher level qualifications – especially in more depressed local labour market areas.
- Jobs demanding higher level skills are open only to people with such skills. Jobs requiring only low level skills are open not only to people with poor skills but also to people with higher level skills if they are willing to 'bump down' in the labour market to fill them. This means that in terms of absolute numbers of jobs those with poor skills have a smaller pool of jobs available to them.
- Those in occupations associated with low levels of skill typically travel shorter than average distances and earn less money.
- Geography matters most for people with poor skills. Those with poor skills have fewer opportunities and face more constraints in the labour market – both in skills terms and geographically – than their more highly skilled counterparts. The quantity and quality of jobs available locally is of particular importance for low skilled people.

Source: The geography of poor skills and access to work, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2006

4. Five ways of working

4.1 Collaboration

<i>Adds no value</i>	<i>Adds some value</i>	<i>Adds moderate value</i>	<i>Critical to tackle the issue</i>
			X

Partnership and ‘cross-PSB’ collaboration would be required to tackle the scale of the economic activity problems identified in this chapter. For example, with local authorities involved with the City Deal investment programme and projects involving the Gwent Strategic Well-being Assessment Group (GSWAG); and the third sector involved in upskilling residents for employment.

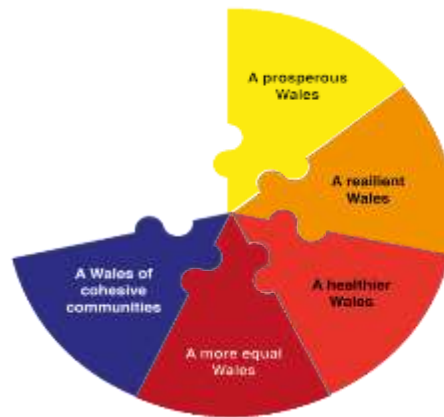
4.2 a) Integration – links with themes

<i>Economic</i>	<i>Social</i>	<i>Environmental</i>	<i>Cultural</i>
	X	X	

Increasing local job opportunities and training/upskilling for current low skilled residents in particular, should contribute to the social well-being of citizens in terms of improved emotional well-being, standard of living including better housing and a reduction in crime levels (for example, studies have shown that poverty is a strong driver of violent offending amongst young people).

More local jobs could lead to a reduction in commuting and would also have a beneficial impact on energy conservation and the state of the environment.

4.2b) Integration –Contribution to the National Goal



Supporting Commentary

Improving transport networks enables people to access work more easily and may remove barriers to employment.

Improving transport networks to work opportunities creates opportunities for individuals to access employment which in turn can improve physical and mental well-being.

Improved local networks improve connectivity and an ability to access work opportunities both within and outside of the area.

4.3 Thinking to the Long Term

Short term (1-2)	<p>The future trend projected from a 6 year base shows the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• An increase in the total number of working residents• A decrease in the total number of people working in the authority• The number of people working in home authority less than the number of people commuting out of the authority• An increase in the number of people commuting into the authority
Medium term (2-5 years)	<p>The future trend projected from a 6 year base shows the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• An increase in the total number of working residents• A decrease in the total number of people working in the authority• The number of people working in home authority less than the number of people commuting out of the authority (with a widening gap)• A decrease in the number of people commuting into the authority
Long term (10 years plus)	<p>Time span too long to have any confidence in extrapolated data from current trend.</p>

4.4: Prevention

Current transport networks within Blaenau Gwent present barriers to individuals accessing work. For example, certain areas such as industrial estates are difficult to access via public transport due to routes and times. Measures to improve the network within and outside the area would open up a wider range of work opportunities. For some accessing work closer to home could increase levels of disposable income.

4.5: Involvement

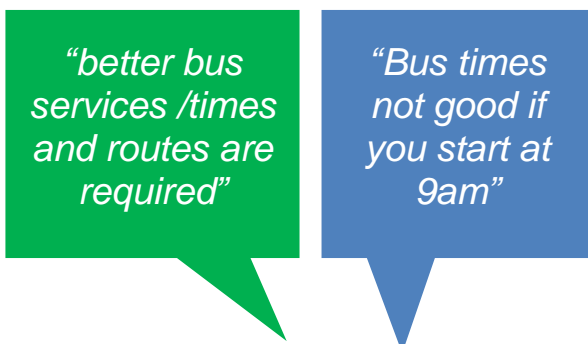
During the 'Blaenau Gwent We Want' Public Engagement Programme we received lots of comments about transport in general but most people did not specifically mention the purpose of the transport; for work, shopping, socialising etc. However, there were 4 comments that were specifically about travel to work; these were about the need for buses earlier in the morning and for train and bus connections to be joined up.

We received a number of comments about the need for 'local jobs' suggesting that many people wanted to travel as little as possible to their workplace.

Our theme 'transport' was the 6th most popular theme overall with 301 comments (8%). When we asked what would make Blaenau Gwent a better place improvement to transport was the 5th most popular comment (222, 8%). Transport was also the 4th most popular comment when we asked what things are important for people to live well and enjoy their lives (48, 12%).

Most of the comments we received were about more accessible bus/train times and the need to align the train and bus times. Improved transport between valley towns and Cardiff/Newport was also a popular subject. Some people also mentioned that the cost of public transport was too high.

Examples of comments we received:



The National Survey for Wales estimates that in 2014 the usual mode of transport used by people in Wales to get to a job was mainly by car, 76% and an additional 5% for those with lifts from family and friends. More people walked, 16% compared to 10% who caught the bus or train. A further 4% used a taxi.

Selection of relevant images from 'Blaenau Gwent We Want' process



5. What is currently being done to tackle this issue?

5.1 Is this issue currently being tackled in partnership?

The issues highlighted at 2.4 do not currently feature within the single integrated plan.

5.2 What wider assets could assist in tackling this issue?

Wider assets that could be used to tackle this issue will be explored through further response analysis work dependant on priority setting of the PSB.

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6. What this tells us about Well-being in Blaenau Gwent

Even though the average distance commuted to work in Blaenau Gwent in 2011 was slightly less than the Wales average Blaenau Gwent commuters experienced the biggest percentage increase in commuting distance between 2001 and 2011 in Wales and the 5th highest of all local authorities in England and Wales.

In 2015 almost half of working residents in Blaenau Gwent commuted out of the authority, the third highest in Wales. The main destinations were Caerphilly, Monmouthshire and Torfaen with cities attracting a relatively small percentage of the authority's commuters. In 2015 commuters into the authority accounted for less than a third of people working in Blaenau Gwent, which is equal to the average commute into an authority in Wales.

A significant fall in the number of people working in the authority has been seen since 2006 with less people commuting in and more people commuting out of the authority, which infers less availability of employment locally. The number of working residents of Blaenau Gwent in 2015 is similar to that of 2001, achieving this by an increased number of commuters outside the authority, generally having to travel further for work.

If current trends continue there will be a modest increase in working residents but with more than half of these having to commute out of the authority. There will also be further decreases in the number of people working in the authority with a reduction incoming commuters.



5. Social Well-being

Social Well-Being

This well-being chapter focuses on social well-being. It has been developed collaboratively by partner organisations represented from the Blaenau Gwent Public Service Board. Social well-being is identified as one of the four key sustainable development pillars for improvement by the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. Social well-being can be defined as the key factors which allow people living in our area to lead happy, included, fulfilled lives. Key examples of these factors include healthy lifestyles and behaviour, educational outcomes, homes, connectivity, and feeling safer and included. These factors affect social well-being along the full life course from a healthy baby being born through to a fulfilled, engaged life in old age.

Under the principles of sustainable development social well-being should not be seen in isolation focusing on the needs of only those in the present. Sustainable social development will take appropriate and measured consideration of the impact of economic prosperity and the environmental viability of an area now and for future generations. For this well-being assessment for Blaenau Gwent the following sections or 'measures' are considered:

1. [Healthy life expectancy and health inequalities](#)
2. [Health Lifestyles](#)
3. [Baby and Children's Health & Development](#)
4. [Emotional Health and Well-being](#)
5. [Ageing Well](#)
6. [Educational Outcomes for Children and Young People](#)
7. [Community Safety](#)
8. [Homes & Households](#)
9. [Local Transport Links & Interconnectivity](#)
10. [Social Care & Support](#)

Section 5.1: Healthy Life Expectancy and Health Inequalities

1. Overview

The goal to create a 'Healthier Blaenau Gwent' is intrinsically linked to other well-being goals; with the environment, housing, employment, income, lifestyle, transport and community cohesion (wider determinants of health) all impacting in either a positive or negative way on a person's physical and mental health and well-being. Prosperity on an individual and community level is dependent upon good health and wellbeing. In Wales as a whole and in Blaenau Gwent, people are living for longer and mortality rates from cancer and heart diseases are reducing. Looking to the future, longer life expectancy will result in the number and proportion of older people in Wales rising. For the wellbeing of individuals and the sustainability of services, it will be vital that these extra years are lived in good health.

Beneath the picture of improving health, there remain stark inequalities in health and disease prevalence, alongside more people living longer with a greater range and complexity of chronic ill health conditions. Although increasing, life expectancy and healthy life expectancy remain lower in Blaenau Gwent than for Wales as a whole. Large differences in life expectancy persist between the least and most deprived areas. In men, there remains a gap in life expectancy of around 9 years between the least and most deprived, and an even larger gap in healthy life expectancy of approximately 19 years, the gap is larger for women. These gaps show no sign of reducing over time, but are unfair and largely modifiable. This has significant impact on people, communities and the sustainability of public services, particularly health and social care services, for future generations.

2. What is the data saying?

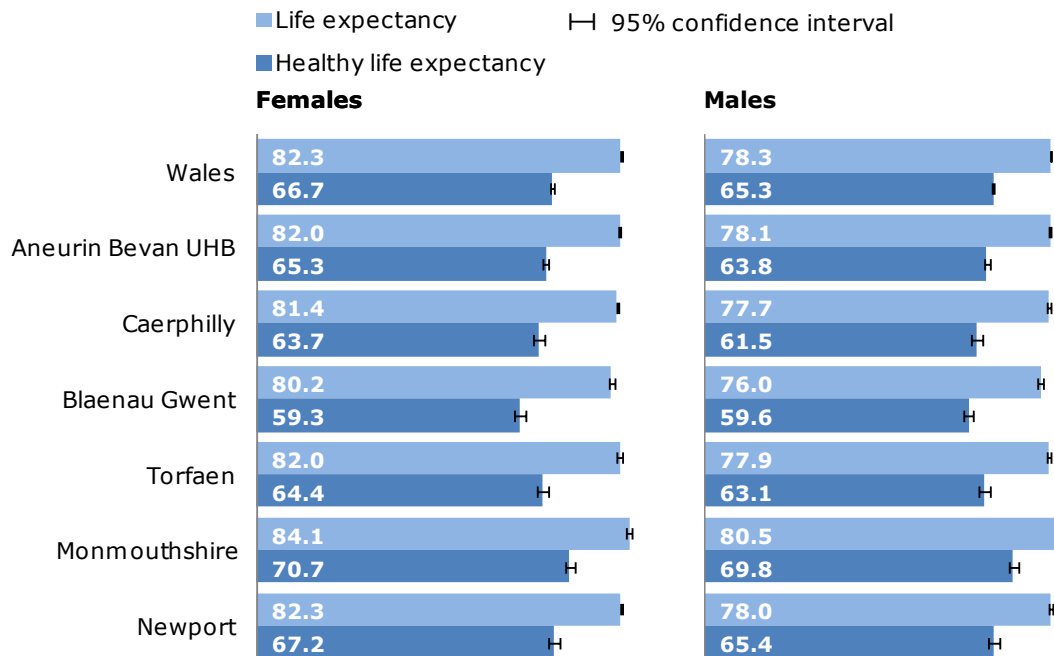
2.1 At a Blaenau Gwent level

Figure LE01 shows average male life expectancy, for babies born today, in Blaenau Gwent was 76 years (2010-14) slightly less than the Wales average of 78 years. Life expectancy for females is about four years more than males at 80 years which is also slightly less than the Wales rate of 82 years.

Fig LE01: Life expectancy and healthy life expectancy by area

Life expectancy and healthy life expectancy at birth, males and females, Wales and Aneurin Bevan UHB, 2010-14

Produced by Public Health Wales Observatory, using WHS & WIMD 2014 (WG), PHM & MYE (ONS)



People living with more years of good health have better well-being for longer because they are not only free from limiting illness but are more able to mutually benefit from other aspects of well-being such as prosperity, social and family connectedness, cultural opportunities and the natural and urban environment.

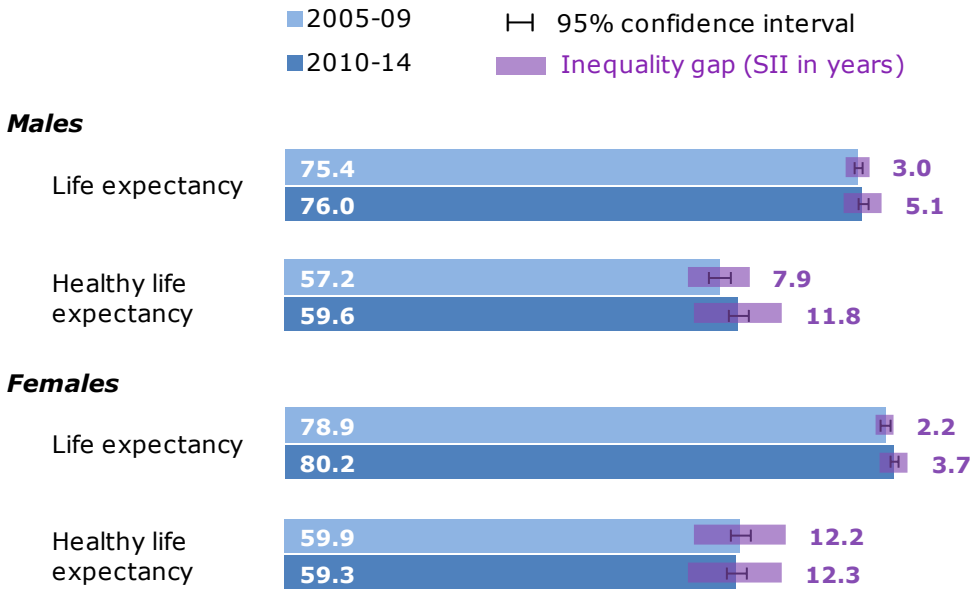
Blaenau Gwent males born today can expect approximately 60 healthy years of life and females about 59 years. For both males and females, Blaenau Gwent has statistically significantly lower healthy life expectancy than Wales

as a whole (males, 65.3 years; females, 66.7 years). There has been little change in the last decade with estimates suggesting healthy life expectancy is increasing only slightly. In essence, this means that not only are the most deprived likely to live shorter lives they are likely to enjoy fewer years in good health and for a smaller proportion of their lives. This negatively impacts quality of life, ability to work and the need for health and social services.

Fig LE02

Comparison of life expectancy and healthy life expectancy at birth, with Slope Index of Inequality (SII), Blaenau Gwent, 2005-09 and 2010-14

Produced by Public Health Wales Observatory, using PHM & MYE (ONS), WHS & WIMD 2014 (WG)



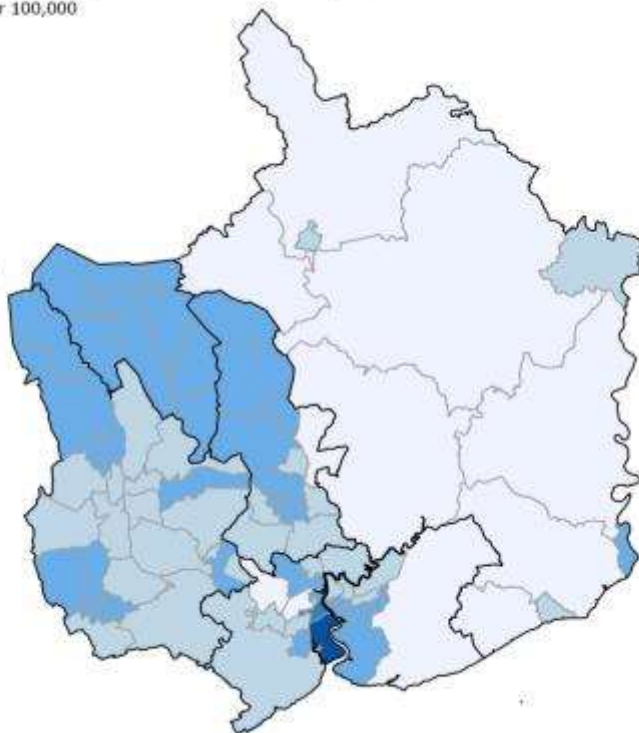
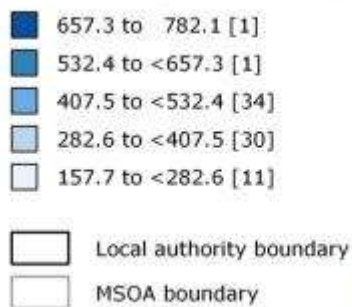
Premature Mortality

Death rates amongst those aged under 75 years are an important indicator for the wellbeing of citizens. Whilst gradually improving over time, in 2012-14, Blaenau Gwent had the highest all-cause mortality rate for persons aged under 75 and all ages, compared to its neighbour Monmouthshire which had the lowest all-cause mortality rate for persons aged under 75 and all ages in the Gwent area (Figure LE03).

Figure LE03: Mortality by Area

All-cause mortality, persons, under 75, Aneurin Bevan UHB, 2012-2014

MSOA, European age-standardised rate per 100,000

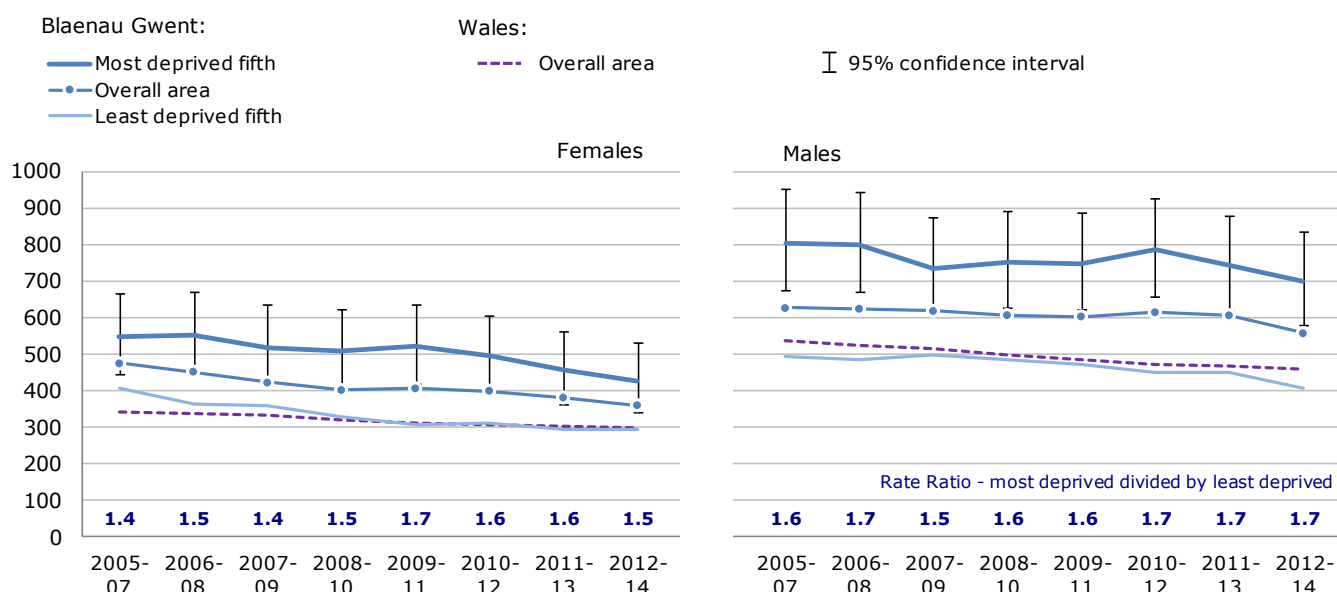


Produced by Public Health Wales Observatory, using PHM & MYE (ONS)
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Figure LE04 shows the annual premature mortality rate in Blaenau Gwent from all causes, standardised for age, whilst declining slightly, is higher than Wales as a whole. Males have higher rates of premature mortality than females.

Figure LE04: Mortality

All-cause mortality, European age-standardised rate per 100,000, under 75s, Blaenau Gwent, 2005-2014
Produced by Public Health Wales Observatory, using PHM & MYE (ONS), WIMD 2014 (WG)



As shown in Figure LE04 overall mortality and preventable mortality rates are slightly lower than they were ten years ago, but the gap between the least and most deprived fifth shows no sign of reducing. For deaths occurring at under 75 years of age, mortality rates have remained more than twice as high in the most deprived. In the most deprived fifth of Wales, preventable mortality accounts for 25% of the overall mortality rate in males, and 20% of the overall mortality rate in females. These figures are considerably lower in the least deprived fifth, at 18% and 14% respectively. That is to say, in more deprived areas, there is a higher rate of premature deaths and a greater proportion of these are preventable.

The major causes of premature mortality are circulatory disease and cancers. Reducing overall mortality from circulatory disease to levels seen in the least deprived areas of Wales would increase life expectancy in the most deprived areas by 1.5 years in males and 1.3 years in females with greater potential gains in the more deprived areas. Similar gains could be made if cancer mortality rates were reduced to the same level (1.3 years in males, 1.2 in females). A significant proportion of circulatory disease and some types of

cancer is attributable to unhealthy health behaviours (diet, physical activity, smoking). For many types of cancer, more positive outcomes are associated with early detection and diagnosis. This depends on health services, but also on patient's awareness of cancer signs and symptoms of cancer and whether they seek treatment promptly.

General health and limiting long term illness

Clearly, increased life expectancy is a positive development. However, it is also important that during extra years lived, people are as healthy and able as possible. About 60% of the adults in Blaenau Gwent describe themselves to be in good, very good or excellent health, a slightly lower rate than in other areas of Wales. For all adults aged 16 years and over a quarter (27%) of adults in Blaenau Gwent reported their general health as poor to fair in 2014/15 (Welsh Health Survey, 2016). This is fewer by 3% than in 2004/5 but higher than for Wales (19%).

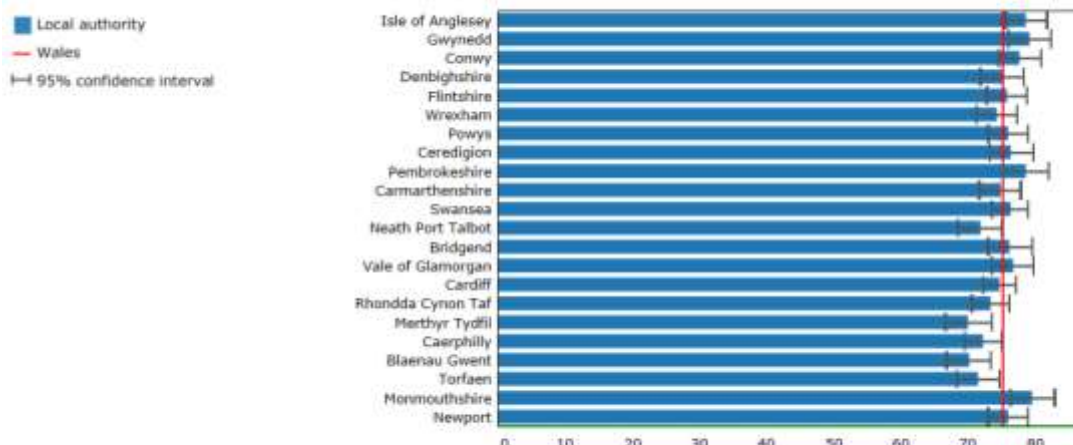
Limiting long term illness, particularly amongst the working age population is an important indicator for wellbeing, as it reports whether or not a person's daily activities are limited by their ill health.

Citizens free from limiting long term illness are more likely to be able to participate more fully in life compared to those who are limited by their ill health obtaining a fuller for longer mutual benefit with family, employment, leisure and culture, getting around in their community, connecting and socializing, and so on.

Figure LE05 shows, in Blaenau Gwent, fewer than 70 percent of working age adults reported that they are free from limiting long term illness compared to just over three quarters (75.4%) for Wales as a whole.

Figure LE05: Free of Limiting Long Term Illness

Working age adults free from limiting long term illness, age-standardised percentage, persons aged 16-64, Wales and local authorities, 2014-2015



Please consult the technical guide for full details on how this indicator is calculated. Produced by Public Health Wales Observatory, using Welsh Health Survey (WG)

Figure LE06 shows 40% of adults in Blaenau Gwent reported being limited in some way in their day to day activities by a health problem / disability, compared to 29 per cent in Monmouthshire (*age-standardised*).

The percentage of adults who reported being limited a lot by a health problem or disability was 22 per cent in Blaenau Gwent (*age-standardised*), the highest in Wales.

The percentage of people who reported being limited at all by a health problem or disability rose from 28 per cent in the least deprived fifth to 42 per cent in the most deprived fifth, a similar result was seen for those who reported being limited a lot which ranged from 11 per cent in the least deprived fifth to 23 per cent in the most deprived (*age-standardised*).

Figure LE06: Percentage of adults who reported that their day to day activities were limited/ limited a lot by a health problem/disability, by deprivation quintile

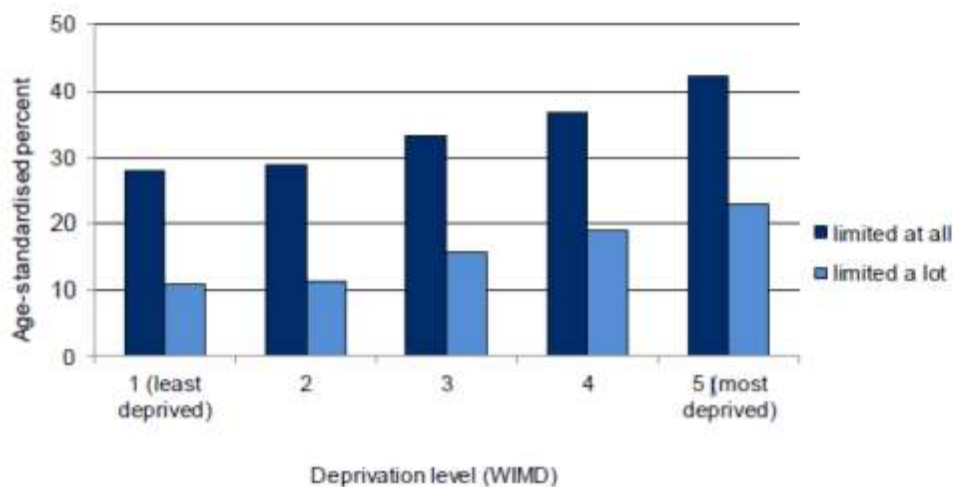


Figure LE07 below shows the leading causes of years of life lost in the UK, these are the non-communicable morbidities that limit and shorten life and impact on wellbeing across the UK. Cancer, circulatory diseases (heart disease and stroke) and respiratory diseases are the highest causes of years of life lost.

Figure LE07: Rank of the leading causes of years of life lost in UK, all ages males and females 2010

Disorder	Mean rank (95% UI)	% change (95% UI)
1 Ischaemic heart disease	1.0 (1 to 1)	-51 (-54 to -37)
2 Lung cancer	2.3 (2 to 3)	-24 (-35 to -14)
3 Stroke	2.7 (2 to 3)	-41 (-47 to -31)
4 COPD	4.4 (4 to 6)	-11 (-19 to -2)
5 Lower respiratory infections	4.6 (4 to 6)	-23 (-33 to -12)
6 Colorectal cancer	6.0 (5 to 7)	-11 (-20 to 9)
7 Breast cancer	7.1 (7 to 8)	-24 (-30 to -17)
8 Self-harm	9.3 (7 to 11)	-16 (-25 to 8)
9 Cirrhosis	9.3 (8 to 14)	65 (-15 to 107)
10 Alzheimer's disease	9.3 (6 to 12)	137 (16 to 277)
11 Other cardiovascular and circulatory	10.4 (9 to 11)	19 (-1 to 40)
12 Road injury	12.6 (10 to 15)	-40 (-48 to -23)
13 Pancreatic cancer	13.8 (11 to 18)	5 (-16 to 18)
14 Oesophageal cancer	15.2 (12 to 23)	1 (-30 to 20)
15 Prostate cancer	16.0 (10 to 28)	7 (-28 to 38)
16 Congenital anomalies	17.2 (14 to 21)	-36 (-45 to -20)
17 Preterm birth complications	17.4 (12 to 24)	-28 (-55 to 37)
18 Aortic aneurysm	19.7 (14 to 26)	-11 (-28 to 7)
19 Non-Hodgkin lymphoma	19.8 (15 to 26)	-3 (-23 to 20)
20 Brain cancer	20.6 (14 to 29)	-3 (-30 to 15)
21 Drug use disorders	20.8 (14 to 39)	577 (71 to 942)
22 Leukaemia	21.6 (16 to 26)	-8 (-20 to 3)
23 Falls	22.6 (18 to 27)	6 (-16 to 26)
24 Stomach cancer	23.0 (14 to 27)	-49 (-55 to -32)
25 Ovarian cancer	23.2 (15 to 29)	-12 (-32 to 25)
26 Diabetes		
28 Bladder cancer		

Murray *et al.* (2013) UK health performance: findings of the Global Burden of Disease Study 2010. *The Lancet* 381: 997-1020

Cardiovascular disease

Circulatory disease encompasses cardiovascular disease e.g. heart attacks, heart disease and strokes. Many of the risk factors for cardiovascular disease are modifiable, for example, high blood pressure, obesity, and tobacco use.

Figure LE08: Cardiovascular Disease

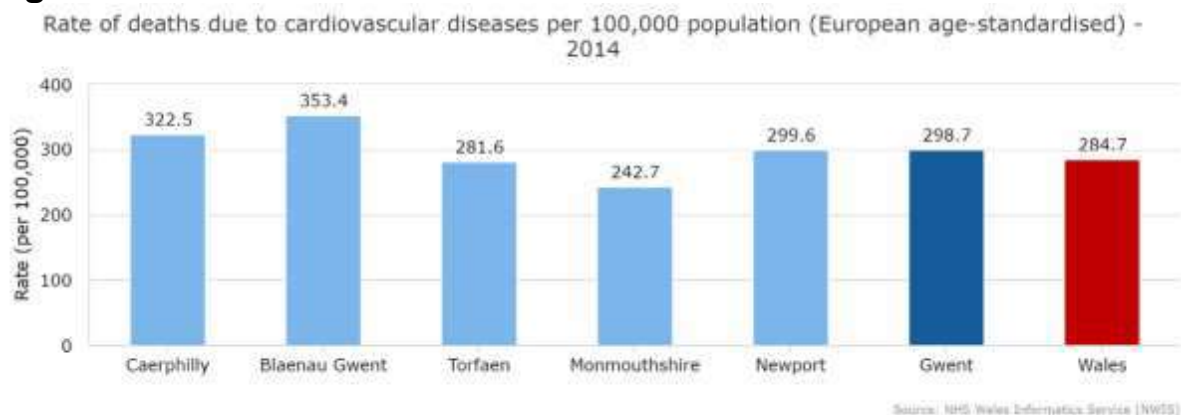


Figure LE08 shows deaths from cardiovascular disease are high in the area compared to the majority of Gwent and Wales. All local authority areas in the Gwent region saw a fall in the rate over 2010-14.

Cancer

Cancer is a major cause of ill health; around 4 in 10 people in the UK will be diagnosed with cancer during their lifetime and this is predicted to increase to 50% by 2020. Much of this increase reflects the fact that people are living longer, as half of cancers occur after the age of 66 years.

Breast, prostate, lung, bowel cancers and melanoma remain the most common cancers in Wales in terms of numbers of new cases. The most common cancers in 2015 were breast, prostate, lung, bowel, melanoma, head and neck, and non-Hodgkin lymphoma. Prostate cancer is the most common cancer in men, accounting for just over a quarter of men's cancer cases in 2015. Next most common were lung and bowel cancers each with a similar number of cases, followed by cancers of the head and neck, bladder and then melanoma. In women, the commonest cancer is breast cancer, with numbers approaching a third of all cancers in women in 2015. Lung cancer was the next most common in women, making up almost 13% of cases. Cancers of the bowel and the womb (uterus), and melanoma made up a further fifth (20%) of cases in women [*Welsh Cancer Intelligence and Surveillance Unit PHW 2017*].

Rates of the majority of types of cancer in Blaenau Gwent are similar to rates in Wales and where they are higher this is rarely a difference that is statistically significant. This may be because the numbers of cases are relatively low. The exception to this is for lung cancer in women, where the rate is statistically, significantly higher in the Gwent region than for Wales, and for women below the age of 75 years, statistically significantly higher in Blaenau Gwent than for Gwent as a whole. This is predictable, given the higher prevalence of women who have smoked, or who smoke in Blaenau Gwent.

A range of factors influence an individual's risk of developing cancer; some of which, such as age, sex, and genetic makeup, cannot be modified. However, many risk factors to developing cancer can be modified: it has been estimated that approximately 40% of cancers are directly related to lifestyle behaviours, such as tobacco use, diet, physical inactivity and alcohol consumption and are therefore potentially preventable, if health behaviours are altered.

Smoking remains both the biggest challenge and opportunity to reduce people's risk, but levels of obesity, harmful drinking and sun exposure also contribute heavily to increasing incidence of certain cancers.

There are inequalities across the population in terms of cancer incidence and survival for certain cancers; those with greater socioeconomic deprivation more likely to present with new cancers, they are less likely to survive than those who are more affluent.

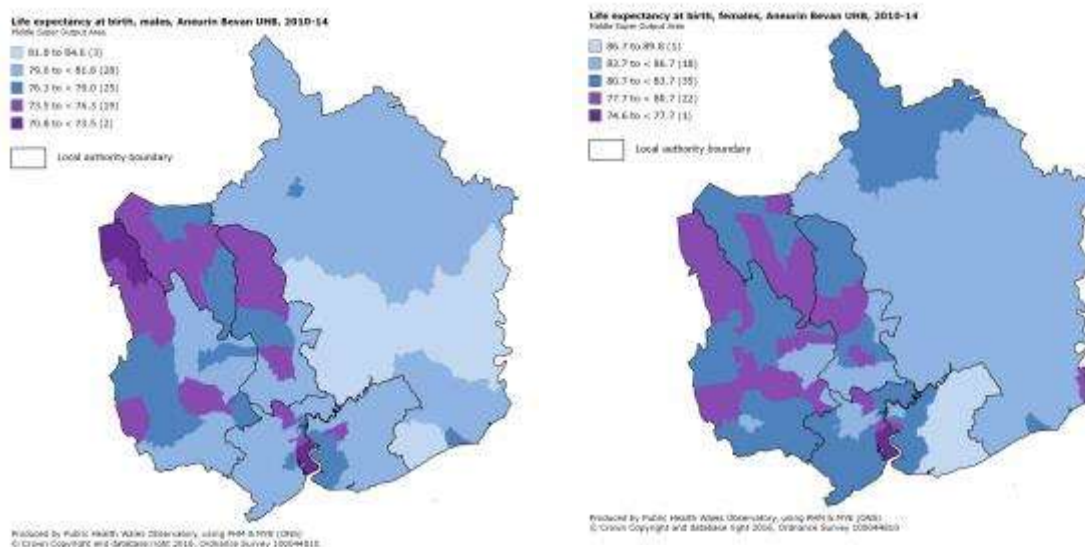
The inequity in cancer survival rates depending on socio-economic deprivation is clear in this Wales level data. This illustrates that whilst survival rates have increased in all quintiles since 1999; from 2004-08 you were 17% less likely to survive for five years if you were in the most deprived quintile than those in the least deprived quintile. The highest cancer mortality rate by

local authority in Wales is in Blaenau Gwent. The rate here is 12% higher than the Wales rate, whereas the local authority with the lowest cancer mortality rate is 16% lower than the Wales rate.

2.2 At a neighbourhood area level

Life Expectancy is not equally distributed and across Blaenau Gwent, ranging from 73 years up to 78 years for men, and for females from 78 years up to 81 years across MSOAs within area. Figure LE09 below show life expectancy across Gwent and Blaenau Gwent for males and females. Whilst there is some variation across Blaenau Gwent, this is relatively small and the main consideration is that Blaenau Gwent as a whole has lower life expectancy than the rate in Wales.

Figure LE09: Variation in life expectancy across MSOA in Blaenau Gwent for males and females



Similarly, there is some local variation in the rate of Coronary Heart Disease in GP registered populations in Blaenau Gwent. However, compared to Wales the rates are relatively high and preventative action to reduce prevalence is required across the whole of Blaenau Gwent.

With regards to cancer, men remain more likely to develop cancer than women over their lifetime. Cancer is much more common in older people,

with the highest number of new cases in 65-79 year olds. Two thirds of cancer cases in Wales occur in those over 65 years, especially in men. Women in age-groups between 35 to 54 years old continue to have higher cancer rates than men

In the five-year age groups between 35 and 54 years, women's rates were statistically significantly higher than in men. Women in these age groups have a higher proportion of breast cancer compared to women in other age groups. Breast cancer makes up nearly 50% of all the cancers diagnosed in this age range.

2.3 Interpretation of data

The circumstances causing the variation in life expectancy are the 'determinants' of health. Deprivation is a key determinant of worse health and specifically life expectancy (LE). Life expectancy has a strong inverse relationship with deprivation; the higher the deprivation of an area the lower the life expectancy. People living in the most deprived neighbourhoods will be significantly more likely to have lower life expectancy and live for fewer years in good health. Increased life expectancy over the past twenty years is largely due to innovations in medical treatments and care. However, people in Wales do not benefit equally to improved care; with those living in more deprived areas least likely to benefit. Hence, the gap in life expectancy and healthy life expectancy in those from the least and most deprived areas persists.

Cardiovascular disease (CVD) is largely caused by risk factors that can be controlled, treated or modified. Adopting healthy behaviours can help to prevent CVD. Although CVD cannot be cured, the condition can often be managed with medication (to manage high blood pressure and cholesterol etc.) and lifestyle changes to prevent the disease from progressing (e.g. eating a healthy diet, exercising, stop smoking, limit alcohol consumption and stress).

Tobacco use is a major contributor to the risk of CVD and remains a significant public health issue, causing nearly 10% of CVD worldwide. The risk of developing smoking-related diseases increases with how long and how much someone has smoked. These risks fall substantially if smoking is stopped, even for long-term smokers.

The rising trend of overweight and obesity has largely been attributed to unhealthy dietary habits, lack of physical activity and sedentary lifestyles. Obesity is strongly related to major cardiovascular risk factors such as raised blood pressure and type 2 diabetes. Being physically active lowers the risk of developing CVD as regular exercise can reduce the risk of coronary heart disease by about 30%.

Changes to age and sex structure in the population are the main driver of changes in cancer incidence. However, estimates suggest that in the UK around four in 10 of the cancer incidence could be preventable.

The main preventable risk factors are tobacco, obesity, lack of fruit and vegetables in the diet, alcohol, occupational risks such as exposure to asbestos and UV radiation from the sun, use of sunbeds, processed/red meat and certain infections such as Human Papilloma Virus (HPV).

2.4 What are the critical issues for public services to consider?

Health should be considered a 'public good', an essential requirement to enable a prosperous community. It is simply not fair that babies born in more deprived areas are much more likely to have shorter lives with poorer health outcomes. But beyond the individual perspective, inequities in health are damaging at the community or population level. A healthier population enables people to contribute more to society as a whole. A key consideration is that a significant proportion of the burden of ill health in Blaenau Gwent could be prevented, if:

- More people ate a healthier diet and maintained a healthy weight
- More people were physically active
- Fewer people used tobacco
- Fewer people took alcohol above the recommended amounts

To facilitate individual behaviour change, it is essential that public services work collaboratively to create the conditions which increase access to and enable people to more easily make healthier choices.

Health behaviours are learned and established early in life; it is important not just that our young people are knowledgeable and informed about healthy choices, but that efforts are made to 'de normalise' unhealthy behaviours such as tobacco use and that we 'model' healthy behaviours as often as possible.

Noting the high levels of deprivation and as a means of positively impacting on the personal and economic well-being of borough residents, both the local authority and Health Board, as large employers, need to examine options for providing learning and employment opportunities, including apprenticeships and volunteering, to improve the life chances of residents.

3. What research exists to help us develop a response to this/ these issues?

Cost-effective preventive approaches need to contribute to improvements in health outcomes at lower and more sustainable costs. Public health interventions are therefore a key part of the solution to these challenges. The evidence shows that the prevention of ill health can be cost-effective, provide value for money and give returns on investment in both the short and longer terms. A wide range of preventive approaches including interventions that address the environmental and social determinants of health, build resilience and promote healthy behaviours, as well as programmes of vaccination and cancer screening are highly cost effective.

Investing in public health generates cost-effective health outcomes and can contribute to wider sustainability, with economic, social and environmental benefits.

4. Five ways of working

4.1 Collaboration

<i>Adds no value</i>	<i>Adds some value</i>	<i>Adds moderate value</i>	<i>Critical to tackle the issue</i>
			X

Action from no single organisation can be effective in improving the conditions required to affect improved health at the population level. Actions are required across multiple drivers, simultaneously.

4.2 a) Integration – links with themes

<i>Economic</i>	<i>Social</i>	<i>Environmental</i>	<i>Cultural</i>
X	X	X	

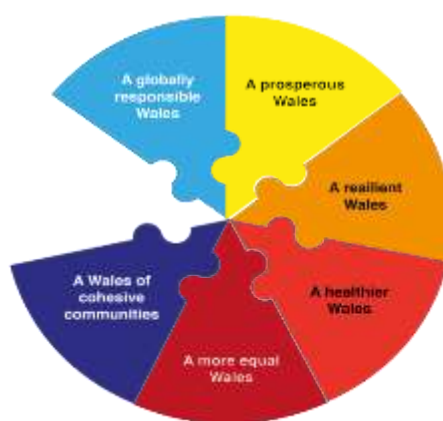
Prevention - removing the causes of poor health and inequalities (rather than addressing the consequences) - offers good value for money. Preventive policies and interventions save lives, money and improve peoples' mental, physical and social well-being. They show both short and long-term benefits far beyond the health system - across communities, society and the economy.

Commentary regards links to social and economic themes are embedded in sections above. However, it is important to recognise from a health and environmental perspective the significant benefits of increasing walking and cycling and reducing the use of cars, particularly for shorter local journeys. Similarly, maintenance and access to green spaces enhances mental wellbeing and encourages increased physical activity.

It is important to realise that creating the conditions to make 'the healthier choice' the easiest choice, is rarely in the gift of the health services, but with

other partner organisations, which influence the wider determinants of health. Working in an integrated and coordinated way is therefore essential if population wide gains are to be made.

4.2b) Integration –Contribution to the National Goal



Supporting Commentary

A reasonable level of health and wellbeing are prerequisites to people's ability to contribute effectively and positively to their community, society and economy. Systems level changes are required to create the conditions to facilitate health promoting behaviours. There is strong evidence that access to quality green spaces promote mental wellbeing and some health promoting behaviours such as increasing physical activity and that actions to promote physical activity, particularly the active travel agenda also contribute to reducing carbon emissions and global responsibility.

4.3 Thinking to the Long Term

Consider the known / likely / potential impact on well-being in the short, medium and long term.

Short term (1-2)	
Medium term (2-5 years)	
Long term (10 years plus)	

There is a comprehensive public health evidence base which identifies interventions and actions which are cost effective, and which are anticipated to result in health gain in the short, medium and long term.

One of the ongoing difficulties with public health intervention is that in spite of being highly cost effective, many of the benefits are not seen except for in the long term. For example, the benefits of interventions which reduce prevalence of smoking in young people now, will not be seen within 10 years, because many of the more serious negative consequences to health of tobacco use do not materialise until older age. However, if we do not intervene now, the rate of preventable chronic conditions and cancer will continue to rise.

4.4 Prevention

Removing the causes of poor health and inequalities rather than addressing the consequences offers good value for money. Preventative policies and interventions save lives and money and improve peoples' mental, physical and social wellbeing. They show both short and long-term benefits far beyond the health system across communities, society and the economy.

A recent systematic review (Mason et al., 2016) suggests that both local public health interventions and nationwide programmes are cost-saving and offer substantial returns on investment (ROI). The overall median ROI was estimated at £14.3 for every £1 spent, ranging from a median ROI of £27.2 to £1 for nationwide public health interventions to a median of £4.1 to £1 for local public health interventions.

Drawing on the World Health Organisation (2014) review and other documents, a more recent briefing from NHS Scotland suggests the following evidence based actions could improve health and reduce health inequalities (NHS Health Scotland, 2016):

- Programmes that ensure adequate incomes, reduce debt and reduce income inequalities
- Programmes that reduce unemployment in vulnerable groups or areas and that promote physical and mental health in the workplace
- Programmes that improve physical environments, such as traffic calming schemes and the creation of green space
- Programmes that target vulnerable groups by investing in more intensive services and other forms of support for such groups, in the context of universal provision
- Early years programmes
- Policies that use regulation and price (for example, minimum unit pricing or taxes) to reduce risky behaviours.

4.5 Involvement

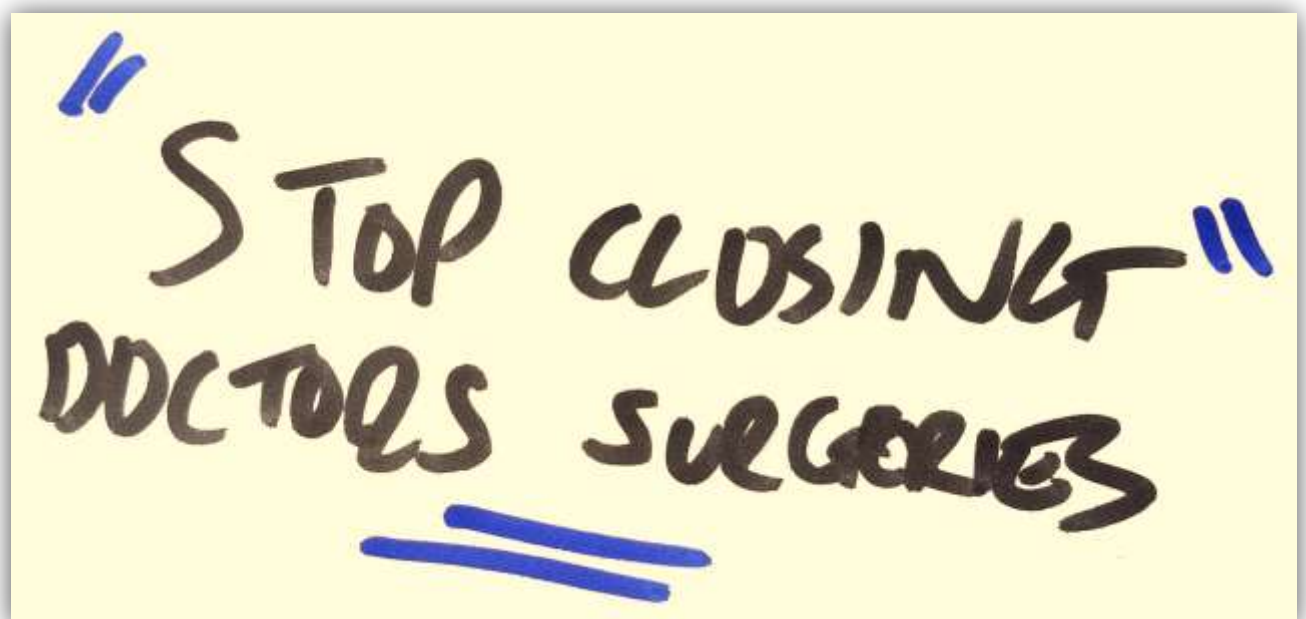
During the 'Blaenau Gwent We Want' Public Engagement Programme we did not receive any comments specifically about life expectancy or cause of death. However, health and fitness were popular subjects with people we spoke with; when we asked what things are important for people to live well and enjoy their lives our topic 'health services' was the 5th most popular with 34 specific comments (8%) and 'exercise facilities' was 8th most popular with 23 comments (6%) showing how important a fit and healthy life is to our residents.

Furthermore, as part of engagement activities conducted by Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, 1,013 Blaenau Gwent residents offered their opinions on health services in the area. The main issues emerging were;

- GP Access – appointments / on-line appointment booking system
- Acute / hospital care – emergency, planned surgery, outpatient services
- Communication – primary and secondary care, waiting list, referral, post-operative care and other hospital sites e.g. County Hospital
- General hospital access – distance / travelling time, public transport, parking
- Mental Health – service referral, Stress Control, Activate your Life and talking therapies

See 'Involvement' in [Healthy Lifestyles](#) Section for more details.

Selection of relevant images from 'Blaenau Gwent We Want' process



5. What is currently being done to tackle this issue?

5.1 Is this issue currently being tackled in partnership?

The critical issues highlighted at 2.4 are currently being explored jointly by the Healthy group within the single integrated plan overseen by the PSB. This work includes the following areas, which has an indirect effect on life expectancy:

- Raise awareness to influence behaviour and lifestyle change
- Improving intervention methods to support reducing child obesity rates and improving healthy eating opportunities for communities
- Promote health, nutrition and active play within early years and school settings

5.2 What wider assets could assist in tackling this issue?

Wider assets that could be used to tackle this issue will be explored through further response analysis work dependant on priority setting of the PSB.

6. What this tells us about Well-being in Blaenau Gwent

Current globalisation and demographic trends, the rising human and financial costs of illness and inequalities in health, and the ever more limited economic and natural resources threaten sustainability and the health and well-being of the people living and working in Blaenau Gwent. We face new challenges – a growing and ageing population living in ill health with multiple chronic conditions, scarce natural resources, economic austerity and tighter public budgets, new epidemics and global security threats.

At the moment, people in Blaenau Gwent are living shorter lives and in poorer health than for Wales as a whole, and that a child born in Blaenau Gwent is expected to live a shorter life and in poorer health than a child born in a more affluent neighbouring County. People in Blaenau Gwent have not benefitted equally from medical advances, which have increased life expectancy in Wales over the past 15 years.

If this is to change, we need to do what we can to prevent preventable ill health. We collectively need to create the conditions which enable and nudge people to adopt health promoting behaviours and discourage hazardous health behaviours. The impact on health should be considered in all policies, to ensure negative impacts on health are identified and mitigated.

Section 5.2: Health Lifestyles

1. Overview

Good health is a resource for life. The fundamental conditions and resources for health include; peace, adequate housing, education, affordable food and clean water, affordable clean energy, a stable eco-system, sustainable resources, social justice and equity. Good health and wellbeing enables people to contribute positively to family, community and productivity. Improvement in health requires a stable grounding in these basic foundations which is achieved through the organised efforts of society.

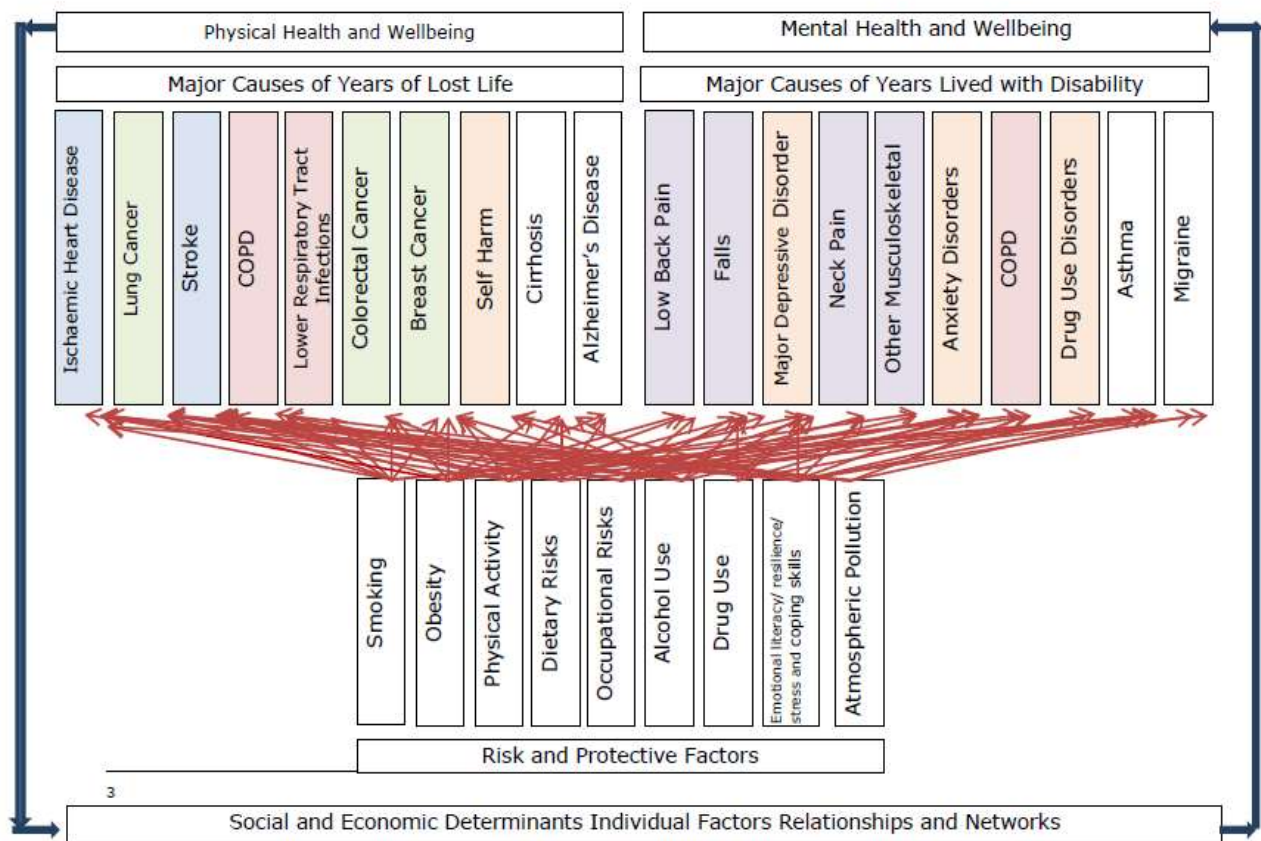
But in addition to these foundations for health, there is strong evidence from many studies, that enjoying four or more healthy behaviours (not smoking, maintaining a healthy weight, eating lots of fruit and vegetables, being physically active, having moderate alcohol intake) promotes health and reduces the risk of diseases significantly. So it is also necessary that we create the conditions and culture to enable, encourage and make it the easiest option for people in Blaenau Gwent to engage in healthy behaviours.

The impact of a small number of ill-health or health-risk behaviours causes or exacerbates the vast majority of our most serious and prevalent poor health outcomes experienced by the citizens of Blaenau Gwent and which cause the most damage to health and equality of wellbeing.

Having healthy behaviours keeps people healthy and free from ill health, extending healthy life expectancy, preventing premature mortality, mitigating the negative effects of our aging population and enabling those with chronic ill-health to lead healthy lives for longer. Most health-harming behaviours have a strong relationship with deprivation and the life circumstances that go with it meaning that rates are higher in areas of higher multiple deprivation. Evidence suggests that people with high well-being are more likely to have

healthy behaviours, because like health itself health behaviour is also determined by a wide range of social, environmental and economic factors.

Figure HL01: Health behavioural causes of premature morbidity and mortality



Source: *Transforming Health Improvement in Wales, Public Health Wales, 2014.*

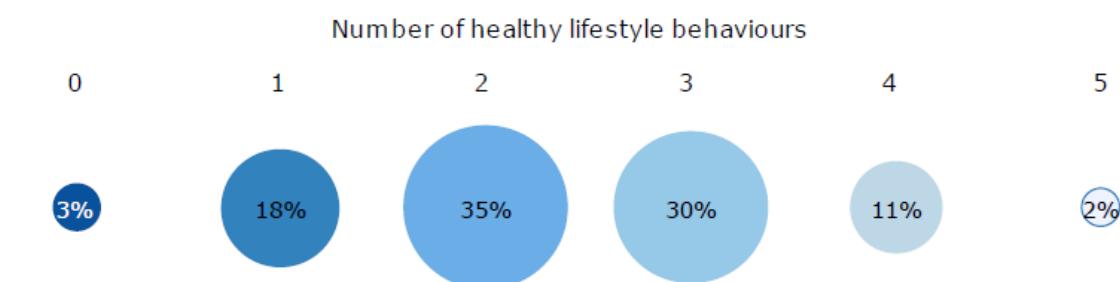
Multiple ill health behaviours are also more prominent in areas of high socio-economic disadvantage as indicated by their relationship with deprivation. The combined effect of poor health behaviours can be substantial, with the risk of mortality increasing as the number of poor health behaviours increases. There is good evidence from many studies, that enjoying 4 or more healthy behaviours can reduce the risk of disease such as diabetes by as much as 72%, vascular disease by 67%, dementia by 64% and cancers by 35% when compared to those who have no, or just one health behaviour.

2. What is the data saying?

2.1 At a Blaenau Gwent level

Figure HL02 shows in Gwent, only 2% of residents in 2013-14 (age 16 and over) engaged with all 5 healthy behaviours. This rises to 11% engaging in 4 healthy behaviours and 30% engaging with 3 healthy behaviours.

Figure HL02: Proportion of people aged 16 and over undertaking healthy behaviour



*not smoking, not drinking above guidelines, eating 5 or more portions of fruit and vegetables per day, physically active at least 5 days a week, healthy weight.

**percentage of the population with the given number of behaviours. The sum of percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding.

Source: Public Health Wales Observatory, using WHS

In the Welsh Health Survey (2014/15) 27% of residents said their health was just fair or poor in Blaenau Gwent compared to 19% across Wales. Amongst other things, this reflects a lower rate of healthier lifestyle behaviours in Blaenau Gwent which are discussed below.

Smoking

Smoking is the largest single preventable cause of ill health and death in Wales with high costs to the NHS, society and the economy. Smoking is associated with more than 50 different diseases and disorders and is a major cause of health inequalities.

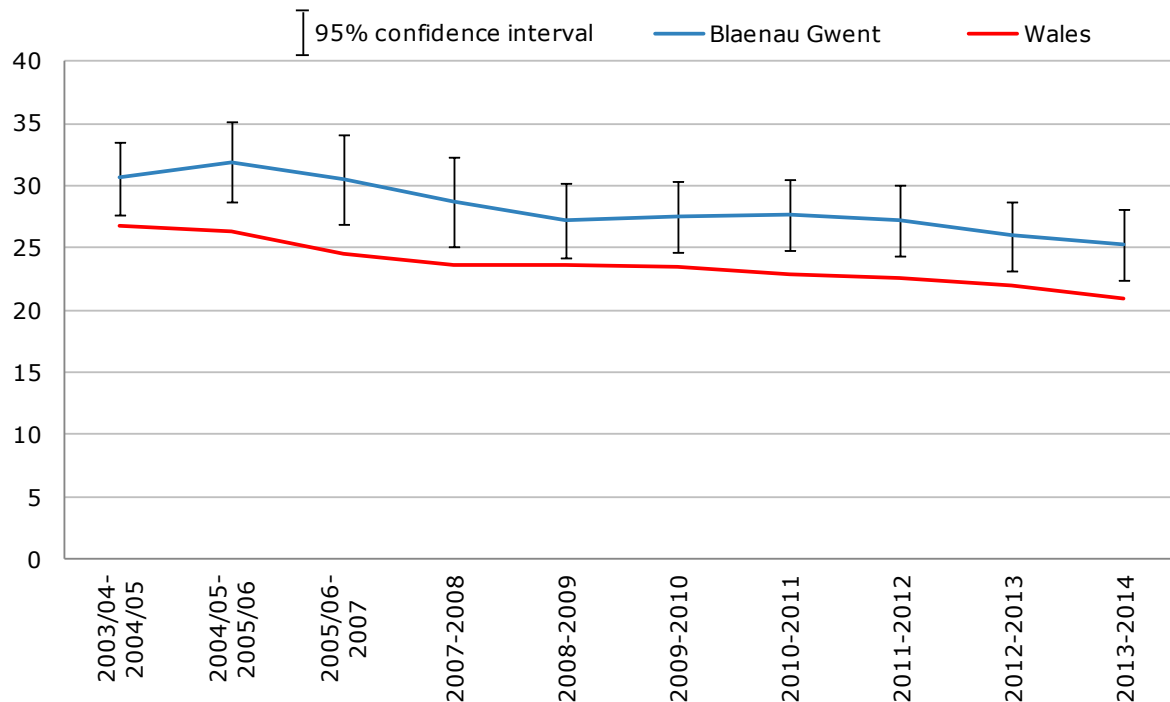
In Blaenau Gwent 26% of adults smoked in 2014-15. This is higher than in other areas of Gwent (21% in 2014-15) and Wales (20% in 2014-15), but the

rate has reduced from above 30% over the past decade, as shown in Figure HL03.

Figure HL03: Smoking in Blaenau Gwent by time

Percentage of adults reporting to be a current smoker, age-standardised percentage, persons, Blaenau Gwent and Wales, 2003/04-2014

Produced by Public Health Wales Observatory, using Welsh Health Survey (WG)



Deprivation is a risk factor for smoking. In Wales, nearly 1/3 of the people in the most deprived fifth of the population smoke (29%), compared to 11% in the least deprived fifth. Smoking rates are 2.5 times higher in the most deprived populations and 4 times higher in the long term unemployed.

The Infant Feeding Survey 2010 demonstrated that one in six of all mothers (16%) in Wales continued to smoke throughout their pregnancy, although this has reduced since 2005 (22%). This is the highest in the UK. This rate is much higher in the lower age groups at 32% (under 20) and 27% (age 20-24). However these have also fallen since 2005 (51% age 20-24).

The health of babies born into lower income households is disproportionately affected by second hand smoke. This can result in x 2 higher risk of sudden infant death, 50% higher risk of lower respiratory infections and asthma with 571 hospital admissions for children every year.

Currently 1 in 5 pregnant women smoke, resulting in higher risk of miscarriage, premature birth and low birth weight. Childhood exposure to tobacco smoke is of specific concern. Two in three smokers start before the age of 18 years; one in five children aged 10-11 years are exposed to second hand smoke (PHW 2016).

Data from the Health Behaviours in School aged Children survey (HBSC) shows that the percentage of children in Wales classed as a regular smoker has fallen since 1998. In 2009-10, 3% of boys and 6% of girls aged 13-14, and 11% of boys and 16% of girls aged 15-16 smoked at least once a week. The 2015 report, based on 2013-14 figures, shows that smoking is at an all-time low among 15 and 16 year olds in Wales with 8% of boys and 9% of girls smoking regularly.

The cost of tobacco represents a higher proportion of household income amongst poorer smokers, meaning that their tobacco use not only damages their health but also contributes to trapping people in poverty (NCSCCT 2013).

In Wales, 1 in 5 adults smoke causing 18% of adult deaths (5,450), with treatment costs of £386 million per year to the NHS for associated diseases; that was 7% of total healthcare expenditure in 2007/08, £129 per head of population. The estimated cost of smoking was £791 million per year to the overall economy (Ash Wales 2009).

Children are particularly vulnerable to second-hand smoke. They have smaller lungs, faster breathing and less developed immune systems, which make them more susceptible to respiratory and ear infections triggered by passive smoking.

Smoking near children can cause a range of respiratory illnesses such as asthma, bronchitis and reduced lung function. Passive smoking results in more than 165,000 new episodes of disease of all types among children,

300,000 primary care consultations, 9,500 hospital admissions and around 40 cases of sudden infant death syndrome each year (Royal College of Physicians, 2010) .

There is evidence that children in Wales seriously over-estimate the percentage of adults who smoke. They estimated 60-70% when the actual percentage was closer to 20%.

Research released in 2013 outlined Welsh public attitudes towards smoking in cars carrying children, to inform policy development. From 1st October 2015, it is against the law to smoke in a car with children under the age of 18 years. The new law is about protecting children from the avoidable dangers that tobacco smoke presents to their health and well-being.

Further research was also conducted on exposure to second hand smoke in cars and homes, and e-cigarette use among 10 - 11 year old children in Wales: [CHETS Wales 2](#)

Latest figures demonstrate that 68% of adults who smoke would like to give up (WHS, 2015) and 41% of smokers tried to quit in the last year.

Alcohol

Alcohol has been part of our culture for centuries and many people use it sensibly. However, alcohol misuse has become a serious and worsening public health problem in Wales and for Blaenau Gwent. Alcohol misuse not only poses a threat to the health and wellbeing of the drinker, it can also cause harm to family, friends, communities and wider society through such problems as crime, anti-social behaviour and loss of productivity (Faculty of Public Health, 2008).

The number of people reporting they drink above the national guidance and those reporting binge drinking at least one day in the previous week was 39% and 25% respectively in Blaenau Gwent, both in line with the Welsh rate over all. Rates have reduced slightly over the past 10 years, as shown in Figure HL04.

Figure HL04: Binge drinking by time

Percentage of adults reporting heavy (binge) drinking on a day in the past week, age-standardised percentage, persons, Blaenau Gwent and Wales, 2008-2014

Produced by Public Health Wales Observatory, using Welsh Health Survey (WG)

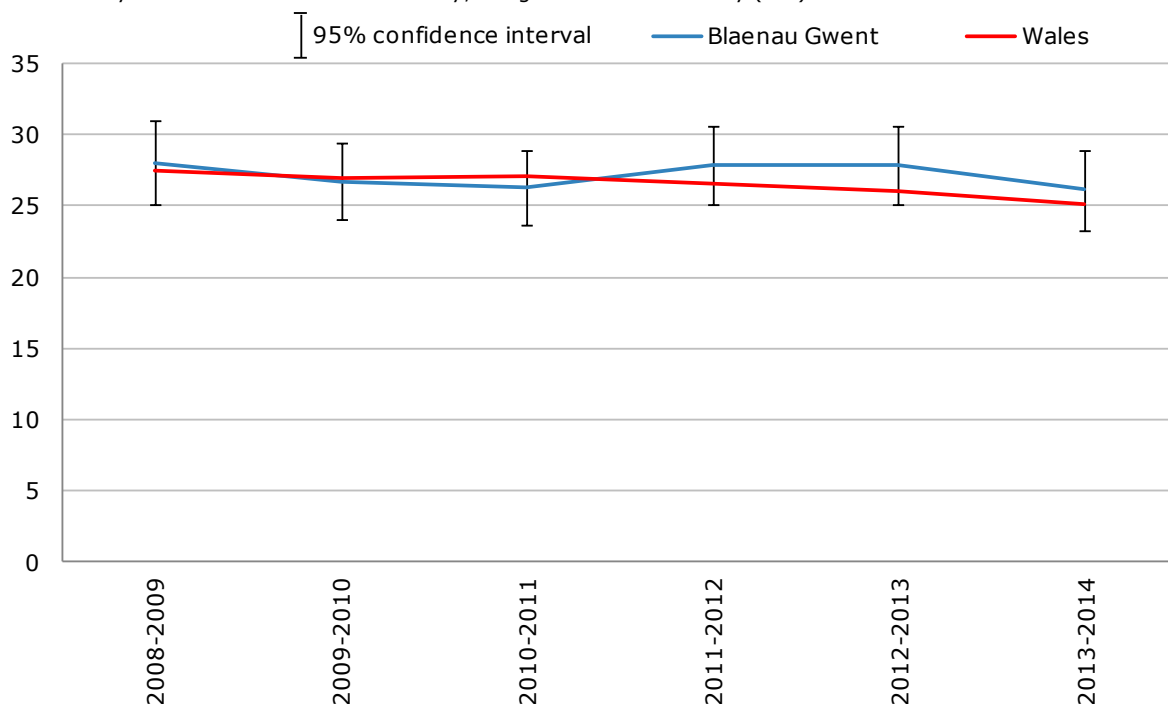
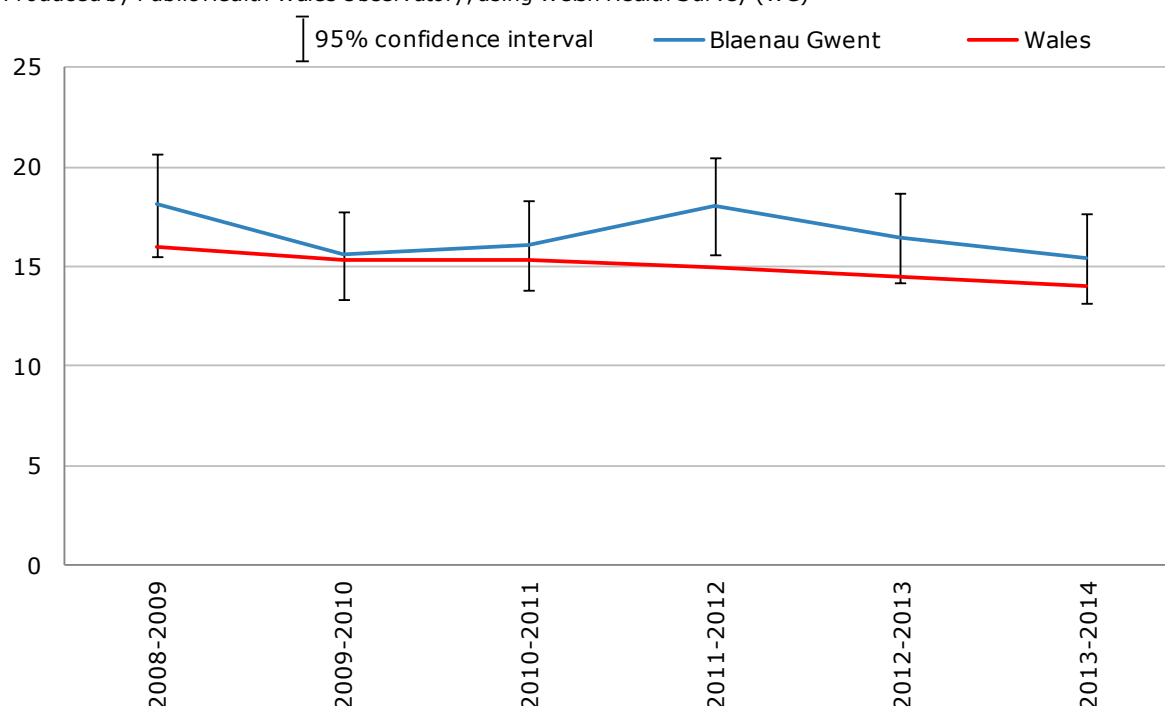


Figure HL05: Very Heavy Drinking by time

Percentage of adults reporting very heavy drinking on a day in the past week, age-standardised percentage, persons, Blaenau Gwent and Wales, 2008-2014

Produced by Public Health Wales Observatory, using Welsh Health Survey (WG)



Adults under 45 now drink less. Drinking above guidelines, heavy and very heavy drinking have decreased in adults aged under 45, particularly in males and the youngest females, and increased or stayed the same for adults aged 45 and over (Figure HL05). Whilst a reduction in average drinking is good news, it is not uniform across the age groups and masks persistent or increased drinking in over 45 year olds. A report by Public Health Wales in 2014 also identified that:

- Alcohol remains a major cause of death and illness in Wales. Around 1,500 deaths in Wales are attributable to alcohol each year (4.9% of all deaths).
- Alcohol related deaths are higher in the most deprived areas of Wales.
- Drinking in children and young people remains a concern with 17% of males and 14% of females aged 11-16 in Wales drinking alcohol at least once a week. This is higher than in Scotland, Ireland, and England.
- The hospital admission rate in children and young people under 18 for alcohol specific conditions has been decreasing steadily for several

years, but around 410 young people were still admitted (in Wales) per year in the most recent period.

Alcohol related harm places a huge pressure on public services. For example, a report by Public Health Wales examining the health, social and well-being problems associated with alcohol found that hospital admissions in Wales, for alcohol-attributable conditions, were increasing over time. In Wales, an estimated 21,700 males and 12,300 females were admitted to hospital in 2013 with an alcohol-attributable condition using the broad definition. This includes individuals with at least one diagnosis that relates to an alcohol-attributable condition, but not necessarily the main reason for attendance.

Alcohol-specific hospital admissions in 2013 were significantly higher than the Wales average in Newport, Caerphilly and possibly Blaenau Gwent (the higher rate in Blaenau Gwent was not statistically significant).

Accident and Emergency admissions for youths due to alcohol are proportionately higher for female youths than male youths, suggesting that female youths are more at risk of the effects of alcohol.

In addressing substance misuse the Gwent Area Planning Board undertook an interim needs assessment in 2013 using extensive Gwent regional and United Kingdom data sources. The report noted that alcohol misuse is responsible for more premature deaths than drug misuse. Almost five times more deaths are caused by alcohol misuse than substance misuse in the UK. For both sexes, the number of alcohol-related deaths increases sharply from the 25-29 age group, peaking in the 55-59 age group. After this the numbers decrease for each age group. The Making a Difference (PHW 2016) report identifies that:

- Alcohol is associated with more than 6,000 cases of domestic violence and more than £1 billion cost of harm to society each year.

- Heavy drinking increases the risk of unemployment and could account for more than 800,000 working days lost due to absence from work and nearly 1 million working days lost due to job loss and reduced employment opportunities in Wales.

Healthy weight, Overweight and Obesity

High body mass index (overweight and obesity) and physical inactivity are the third and fourth leading causes of ill health in the UK. Taken together they are arguably the most important contributor to poor wellbeing in our communities today.

The World Health Organization (2012) regards obesity as one of the most serious global public health challenges for the 21st century. Harms to wellbeing from obesity, physical inactivity and a poor diet are felt across the life course and are intergenerational.

Maternal obesity and excess weight gain in pregnancy poses serious risks to the mother and child including: gestational and type II diabetes, pre-term deliveries, macrosomia, late foetal loss, stillbirth, congenital anomalies and increased neonatal intensive care (Larsen, *et al*, 1990; Power, *et al*, 2003; Leddy, Power and Schilkin, 2008).

The harms to child health and wellbeing caused by obesity are serious and wide ranging and include physical, psychological and social harms. Children themselves report the emotional damage from stigmatisation and isolation as the most serious harms to their wellbeing. Obesity harms children in the short term but also, as most (between 55% to 80%) go on to become obese adults (Schonfeld-Warden & Warden 1997; Lifshitz, 2008), childhood obesity harms life chances undermining a range of wellbeing goals in future generations.

The severity and likelihood of poor wellbeing increase as children age and progress through adolescence in to adulthood. Childhood obesity leads to

and exacerbates adult obesity which in turn causes or exacerbates our most prevalent limiting long term ill health conditions. It is well accepted that adult obesity results in less healthy life expectancy and shorter life expectancy.

On the societal level, the economic consequences of obesity come in the form of increased healthcare costs and impact on the labour market damaging prosperity. People with obesity have lower employment rates, lower productivity with more sick days, and people with obesity earn considerably less. Obesity costs employers in the UK an estimated £4.3 billion annually with the majority £3.2 billion from reduced productivity as opposed to days lost (McKinsey, 2014).

Healthcare spending increases directly with increases in Body Mass Index (BMI). In 2008 the NHS Wales were estimated to spend between 1.3% and 1.5% of their total budget treating and managing the proportion of disease directly resulting from overweight and obesity. The estimated direct annual costs of obesity to NHS Wales across primary, community and secondary care was £73 million. This increases to nearly £86 million if overweight people are included (Welsh Assembly Government Social Research, 2011).

Gwent residents make up about a fifth of the Welsh population, even without adjusting for higher rates of overweight and obesity in Gwent, the *annual* cost to Aneurin Bevan University Health Board could be crudely estimated to be in the region of £17 million.

Figure HL06 shows 62% of audits in Blaenau Gwent, which is considerably more than half, reported being overweight or obese in 2014-15. This is higher than the Wales figure of 59%.

Figure HL06: Adults Overweight or Obese by time

Percentage of adults reporting to be overweight or obese, age-standardised percentage, persons, Blaenau Gwent and Wales, 2003/04-2014

Produced by Public Health Wales Observatory, using Welsh Health Survey (WG)

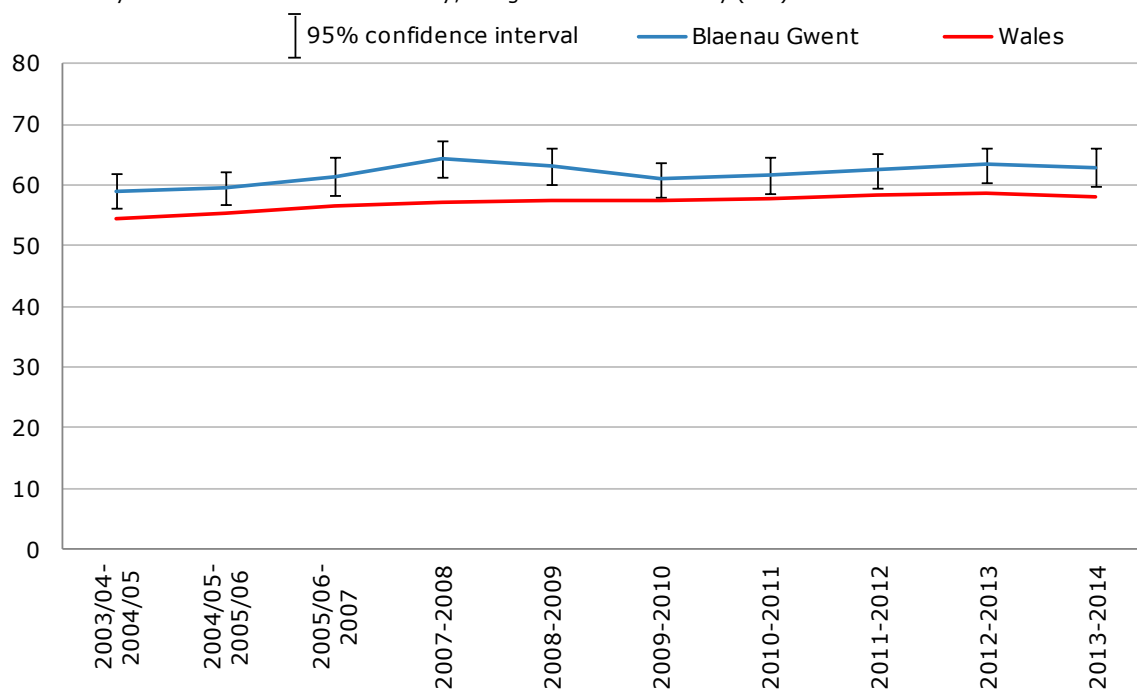
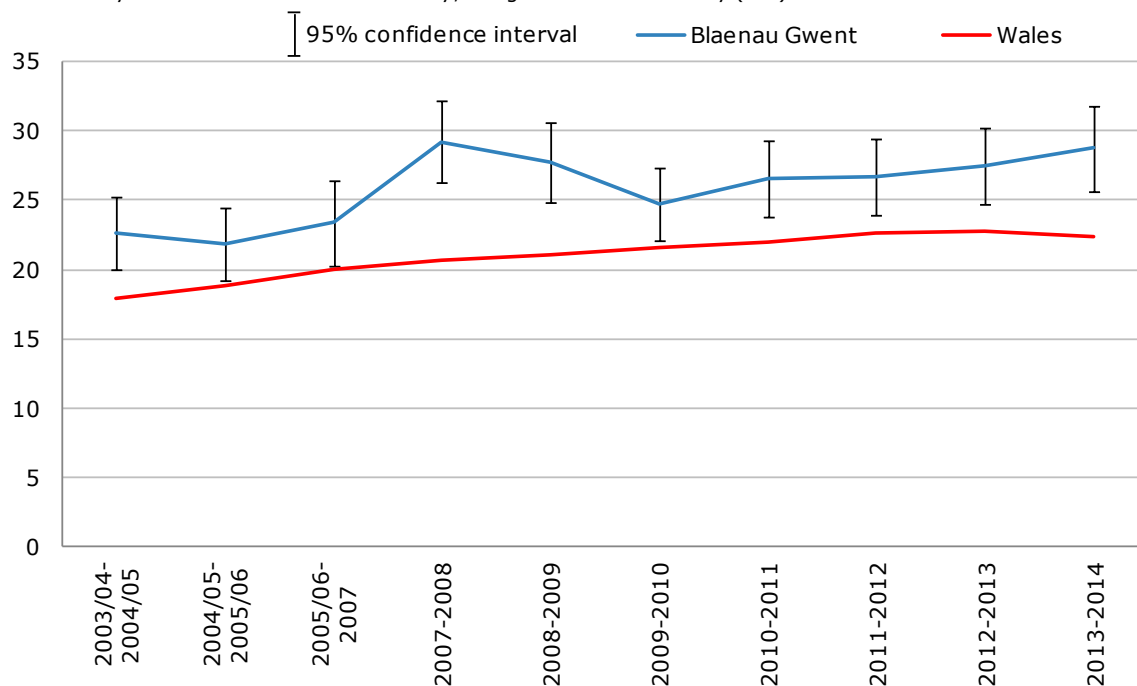


Figure HL07 shows that at 29%, the proportion of adults in Blaenau Gwent who are obese has increased by 6% in the past decade, and is considerably higher than for Wales as a whole.

Figure HL07: Adults Obese by time

Percentage of adults reporting to be obese, age-standardised percentage, persons, Blaenau Gwent and Wales, 2003/04-2014

Produced by Public Health Wales Observatory, using Welsh Health Survey (WG)



The most reliable data available on childhood obesity comes from the Child Measurement Programme (CMP) Wales, surveillance of weight for height of children aged four to five years in primary school reception year. Latest data from CMP measured in 2014/2015 (CMP, 2016) shows even at this young age of 4 and 5 years, over a quarter of children in Blaenau Gwent are overweight or obese (29%) and 12% are obese. This is of great concern given the associated future risks.

Analysis of the CMP data by the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation shows that overweight and obesity amongst four and five year olds increase as deprivation increases. Children aged just four and five years old living in areas ranked amongst the most deprived fifth, have significantly higher rates of obesity compared to the Wales average and children living amongst the most affluent 40 per cent. Given the harms to children now and their futures, this is an unacceptable inequity, particularly at this age. Adult obesity shows the same relationship.

Based on observed trends, rates are expected to rise further in future generations creating a significant problem for health and wellbeing and the sustainability of public services in the future.

The Foresight Report 2007 tells us that being overweight or obese increases the risk of a wide range of chronic diseases, principally type 2 diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular disease including stroke as well as cancer. It can also impair a person's well-being, quality of life and ability to earn.

By 2050 the Foresight Report forecasts that 60% of adult men and 50% of adult women will be obese, and 25% of children under 16 will be obese if current trends continue. If rates of overweight and obesity continue to rise, by 2050, this will cost the NHS in Wales £465 million per year, with the cost to society and the economy of £2.4 billion.

Healthy weight is determined by a number of factors, most prominently energy balance between intake of calories and energy expenditure through metabolism and physical activity. In addition to their contribution to a healthy weight, a healthy diet and adequate physical activity are independent health promoting and protective behaviours.

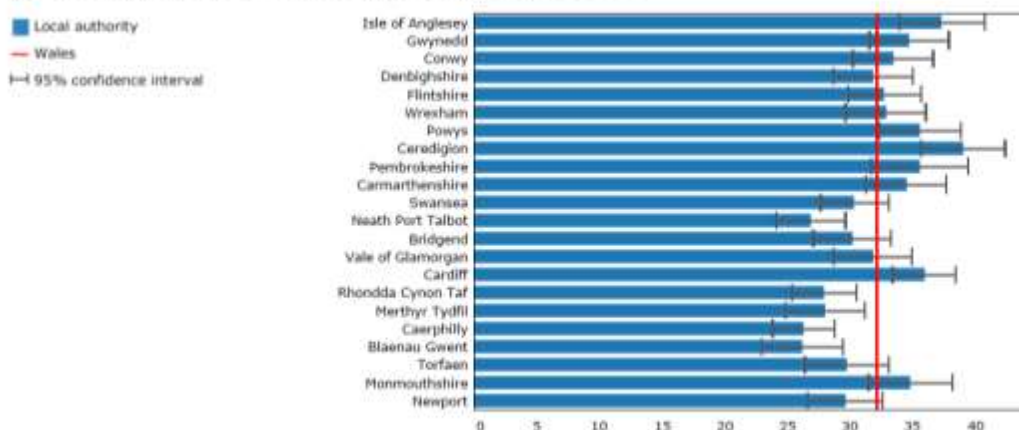
Healthy diet

A healthy diet can contribute to the promotion of health and the prevention of diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, high cholesterol, heart disease, stroke and bowel cancer. Poor diet is the biggest contributor to escalating obesity rates and is causally related to several conditions of unhealthy aging such as osteoporosis and dementia.

There are little available data on 'healthy' diet at local or even national levels. Figure HL08 shows the rate of people consuming five portions of fruit and vegetables daily (five a day) which is good indicator of a healthy diet as it is independently related to good health itself. It is also routinely available from the Welsh Health Survey.

Figure HL08: Healthy Diet by area

Adults who report eating five or more portions of fruit or vegetables within the previous day, age-standardised percentage, persons aged 16+, Wales and local authorities, 2014-2015



Please consult the technical guide for full details on how this indicator is calculated. Produced by Public Health Wales Observatory, using Welsh Health Survey (WG)

Figure HL08 shows that the percentage of adults in Blaenau Gwent who reported eating five a day (WHS, 2014-15) is 26%, which is statistically lower than the average for Wales (32%).

The percentage of adults that reported eating five or more portions of fruit and vegetable the previous day in Blaenau Gwent has remained fairly static over the last decade.

People living in areas of high multiple deprivation with the life circumstances associated with it are at significantly greater risk of consuming less portions of fruit and vegetables and over-consuming diets high in fat, sugar and salt which are particularly bad for health. This contributes to a greater burden of preventable disease.

Physical activity and inactivity

Described by the World Health Organisation as the “best buy in public health”, increasing levels of physical activity has been shown to have beneficial consequences in terms of increasing peoples’ healthy life expectancy and significantly reducing the risk of at least 20 of our most common chronic diseases, including circulatory diseases, some cancers, type II diabetes, low back pain, osteoporosis, mental ill health, falls and dementia.

There is increasing evidence that being physically active outdoors can make a significant contribution to physical health and mental wellbeing over and above the physical activity benefits. Population level physical activity, more people walking and cycling as part of their daily lives, active in their communities and participating in group activities brings benefits across the wellbeing goals from increased consumption of cultural assets, more connected and vibrant communities and benefits local economies. There is evidence that increased activity can help children concentrate and that engagement in sport can reduce antisocial behaviour.

The recommendations for the amount of physical activity to improve health differ across the life stages. Children should accumulate an hour a day of mixed moderate and high intensity physical activity whilst the recommendation for adults is to accumulate at least the equivalent of 150 minutes of moderate intensity *or* 75 minutes vigorous intensity per week. Other important recommendations are to reduce sedentary behaviour (time spent sitting or on screens and, reduce the proportion of physical inactivity (reporting no activity on any days in the past week).

Despite the numerous benefits of being physically active, less than a third (29%) of Blaenau Gwent residents report meeting the physical activity guidelines (WHS 2014/15) for exercise for health, which is roughly the same as for Wales (30.6%). The proportion of people getting enough physical activity to benefit their health in Blaenau Gwent over the last decade has remained stubbornly flat, in spite of the many opportunities available to build physical activity into our daily lives (Figure HL09).

Figure HL09: Regular Physical Activity by time

Percentage of adults reporting to be physically active on 5+ days in the past week, age-standardised percentage, persons, Blaenau Gwent and Wales, 2003/04-2014

Produced by Public Health Wales Observatory, using Welsh Health Survey (WG)

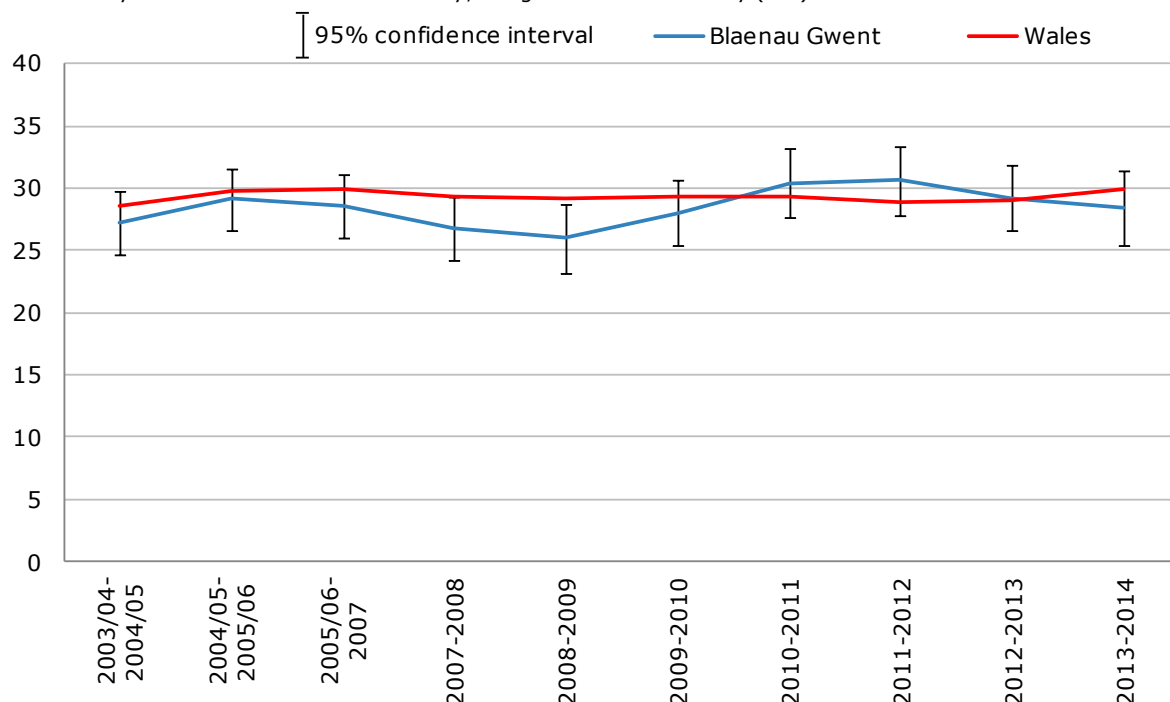
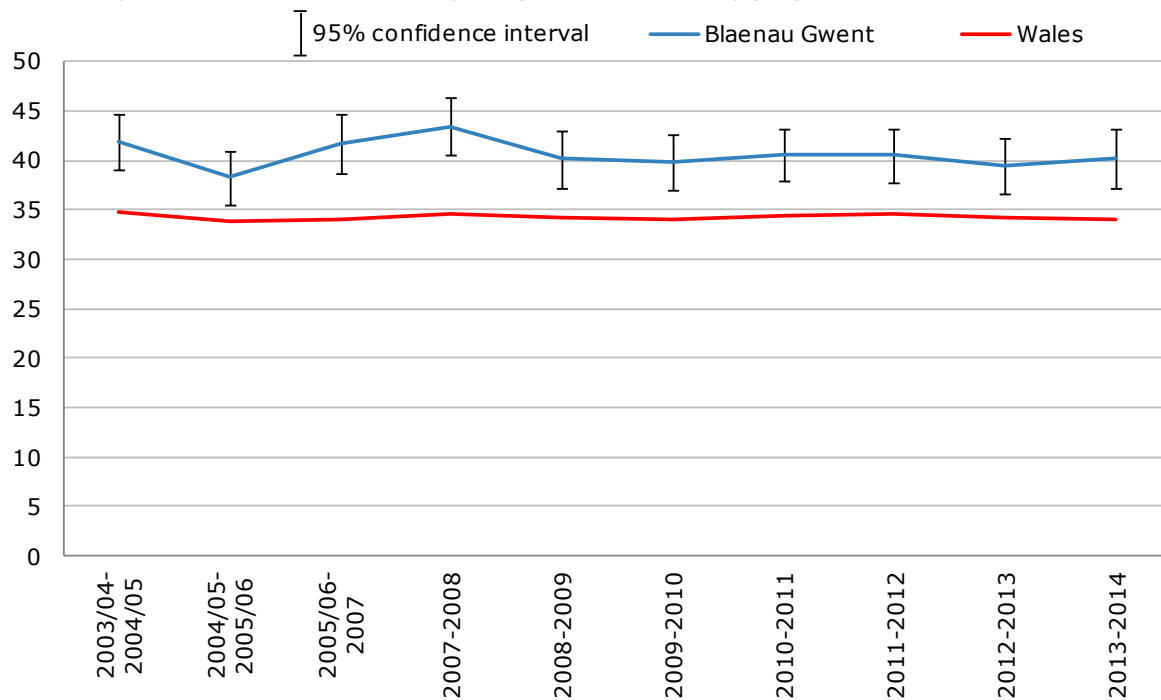


Figure HL10 shows that in Blaenau Gwent more people (40%) report taking physical activity on no days in the previous week than taking the enough activity to benefit their health. This is significantly higher than the Wales rate.

Figure HL10: No Physical Activity by time

Percentage of adults reporting to be physically active on no days in the past week, age-standardised percentage, persons, Blaenau Gwent and Wales, 2003/04-2014

Produced by Public Health Wales Observatory, using Welsh Health Survey (WG)



There is variation at Local Authority level across Wales in rates of people getting enough physical activity for health. Physical activity and physical inactivity are significantly related to deprivation with people twice as likely to be physically inactive in areas of high multiple deprivation compared to their more affluent neighbours.

Physical activity is essential for long- and short-term physical and mental health and may improve academic and cognitive performance. It is associated with reduced anxiety and depression, and increased musculoskeletal and cardiovascular health among young people.

Across Wales, physical activity rates are similar in both boys and girls until teenage years when there is a decline in rates of young women who are

physically active. Findings of the HBSC survey demonstrate that adolescence is a key period for intervention, with overall activity levels declining between the ages of 11 and 15, especially among girls. Good physical-activity habits established in youth are likely to be carried through into adulthood. Low levels of physical-activity and excess sedentary behaviour in youth are associated with obesity in adult life, a serious public health issue with long-term costs globally.

Sexual Transmitted Infections

Overall, rates of new diagnoses of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) in Blaenau Gwent in 2015 were considerably higher than the Wales average. This takes into account both men and women and all age groups. Since 2011 there has been an upwards trend in the rate of new cases in Blaenau Gwent. The situation is most concerning for the 15 – 24 age groups, as shown in Figure HL11 below. In this age group, the infection Chlamydia is a barometer of the sexual health population. It usually does not cause any symptoms, and so is easily passed on if condoms are not used. In young women in Blaenau Gwent the rate of new diagnoses of Chlamydia increased more than 3 fold between 2011 and 2015 (555 per 100,000 to 1,613 per 100,000). This suggests that while the teenage conception rate has declined due to increased use of Long Acting Reversible Contraception, condoms are not being used and young people are at greater risk of contracting STIs. Long term effects of Chlamydia include infertility and ectopic pregnancy.

The trend for rates of gonorrhoea is upwards over the time span, but the numbers affected are far fewer than Chlamydia. However, the rise in antibiotic resistance to gonorrhoea is a concern for the future. Gonorrhoea tends to be more a marker of sexual health in MSM populations (Men who have Sex with Men).

Figure HL11: Rate of STI diagnoses amongst 15-24 year olds in Blaenau Gwent and Wales per 100,000 gender and age-specific population, 2011-2015

		Blaenau Gwent					Wales				
		2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Chlamydia	Male	852	416	752	920	889	485	619	668	679	694
	Female	555	763	1,165	1,286	1,613	632	925	1,049	1,146	1,135
	Total	701	590	959	1,105	1,254	557	768	854	905	908
Gonorrhoea	Male	131	88	88	115	47	65	115	126	131	125
	Female	85	153	154	113	69	47	122	109	110	115
	Total	108	120	121	114	58	57	119	118	121	120
Herpes	Male	109	153	88	161	117	60	86	67	84	80
	Female	149	153	220	248	438	139	177	193	206	243
	Total	130	153	154	205	279	99	130	128	143	159
Warts	Male	590	613	575	529	749	385	456	458	417	427
	Female	491	589	549	564	300	492	516	500	504	456
	Total	540	601	562	547	522	437	485	479	459	441
Total	Male	1,681	1,270	1,504	1,725	1,801	995	1,276	1,319	1,310	1,327
	Female	1,280	1,657	2,088	2,211	2,419	1,311	1,741	1,851	1,965	1,948
	Total	1,586	1,693	2,282	2,539	2,809	1,353	1,865	2,000	2,122	2,129

Source: Public Health Wales

Prevalence of chronic conditions in Blaenau Gwent

A significant proportion of the burden of chronic conditions is attributable to poor health behaviours. We have seen, in Blaenau Gwent, more people than in Wales smoke, are physically inactive, drink hazardously and do not eat healthy diets. It is therefore unsurprising that the prevalence of chronic conditions such as diabetes, cardio vascular disease and some cancers is slightly higher in Blaenau Gwent than elsewhere in Wales. Prevalence (number of cases) data is collected by General Practices who keep registers of those with chronic conditions. In the Figure HL12 below, data are presented by the two GP clusters (Neighbourhood Care Networks NCNs) in Blaenau Gwent.

Figure HL12: GP Population Profiles 2016- Chronic Conditions

Indicator	Blaenau Gwent East	Blaenau Gwent West	Aneurin Bevan University Health Board	Wales
Asthma	6.7%	7.6%	6.8%	6.9%
Hypertension	19.5%	17.0%	16.0%	15.5%
CHD	4.5%	4.2%	3.8%	3.8%
COPD	3.4%	2.9%	2.2%	2.2%
Diabetes	8.9%	8.3%	7.6%	7.0%
Epilepsy	1.0%	1.1%	0.9%	0.9%
Heart Failure	1.3%	1.3%	1.0%	1.0%

Produced by Public Health Wales Observatory, using Audit+ (NWIS)

Figure HL11 illustrates that prevalence of chronic conditions across Blaenau Gwent is higher than the Welsh and Health Board prevalence in the majority of chronic conditions.

Risk factors associated with chronic conditions fall into two categories, these are non-modifiable meaning they cannot be changed or modifiable that can be influenced or changed. Modifiable factors include unhealthy diet, physical inactivity, tobacco use and the harmful use of alcohol. Addressing these factors can have a positive influence on the prevalence of chronic conditions across Blaenau Gwent at an individual and community level.

2.2 At a neighbourhood area level

There is little data in relation to health behaviours at a lower level than local authority. However, there is clear evidence about the relationship of unhealthy behaviours and deprivation and from this we can infer that for the majority of smaller areas in Blaenau Gwent, interventions are required to facilitate the adoption of healthier behaviours and to support people to reduce unhealthy behaviours.

2.3 Interpretation of data

Data in relation to prevalence of disease is available at sub-Local Authority level, however, rates tend to be consistently relatively high across Blaenau Gwent, which suggests intervention is necessary to address modifiable factors across the area.

Data presented above most commonly look at comparative data with Wales. However, it should be considered that beyond this, Wales often compares badly to other UK and European countries in relation to health behaviours.

Welsh Health Survey data are self-reported, although the sample size is sufficient to draw conclusions at the Local Authority level regarding statistical significance. Survey data below this level carries greater uncertainty. It should also be recognised that data from the Health Behaviours in School aged Children survey is at the Wales level, and may not reflect fully, true figures considering the deprivation levels in Blaenau Gwent.

2.4 What are the critical issues for public services to consider?

Clearly, when it comes to diseases, prevention is better than cure and if we are going to address the high prevalence of chronic disease, we need more people to adopt healthier behaviours.

Whilst individuals take some responsibility for their own choices, it is indisputable that your environment, your family and the culture in which you

live greatly influence your health behaviours. For example, if a child lives in a family where no one smokes, goes to a school and plays in a park where no one smokes and has friends who don't smoke, they are less likely to smoke than if they see people smoke on a daily basis and believe it to be 'normal' behaviour. Similarly, people are much more likely to eat fresh fruit and vegetables, if it is easily available and familiar to them. There is considerable evidence that making walking and cycling the 'easiest options' will increase physical activity levels.

It is also the case that high uptake in screening services, allows earlier detection of some diseases, which increase the chances of earlier treatment and better health outcome.

There are opportunities to undertake cross-agency reviews of the targeting and reach of current and planned intervention programmes, at a neighbourhood level, aimed at improving the impact of services on healthy lifestyles across communities. It will also be important to link area based actions to those undertaken regionally, for example Area Planning Board and Health Board initiatives such as implementation of a regional alcohol treatment pathway.

3. What research exists to help us develop a response to this/these issues?

There is a plethora of evidence which demonstrates the value of promoting healthy behaviours at all stages of life, to health, education, community safety and improving the economy.

There is value in instilling healthy behaviours early in lives, so they are a habit and in creating the conditions to make it easier for people to adopt healthier behaviours, and embed them into their daily lives. For example, evidence suggests that providing more opportunities for PE and sport within the

curriculum is positively associated with improved academic performance and higher levels of attainment as measured by numeracy and literacy tests. PE can reduce the potential for disruptive behaviour and poor attendance within the school setting, which suggests increasing physical activity in schools can not only promote health and wellbeing, but can also help to create optimum conditions for learning and academic achievement.

Data from Wales supports these research findings, demonstrating a positive relationship between frequent participation in sport and attainment levels. Schools that have higher levels of frequent sports participation (*hooked on sport*) are more likely to have higher percentages of pupils achieving the Level 2 threshold (5 GCSE or equivalent qualifications A*-C). The effects are the same even when taking into account socio-economic factors that we know can influence participation and attainment levels.

No evidence has been found to suggest that taking part in sport has a negative effect on attainment levels in other areas of the curriculum, even if the curricular time is adjusted to increase the time spent on sport and PE and reduce the amount given to other subjects.

Sport Wales' School Sport Survey (2014)

Recent social insight undertaken in Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly and Torfaen as part of a Large Scale Change programme to get more people, more active, more often, included survey findings from 1,109 women mostly aged 16 to 40 years, on levels of participation in physical activity, what motivates women who were active, the barriers to engaging in physical activity and what would encourage those who are physically inactive to become engaged. The main motivators for being physical active were for health, wellbeing and weight loss. A significant majority of those who were physically active said it

promoted their sense of wellbeing and made them feel better. The majority (about $\frac{3}{4}$) of those women who were not physically active said they would like to be more physically active. The barriers women said would prevent them becoming more physically active were lack of time, the cost and lack of childcare. In spite of the vast array of options available, fewer than 25% of the participants thought there were enough physical activity options in their area. From this in sight work there was a strong sense that women wanted to feel socially connected and confident and that they wanted physically activity that was social and fun.

4. Five ways of working

4.1 Collaboration

<i>Adds no value</i>	<i>Adds some value</i>	<i>Adds moderate value</i>	<i>Critical to tackle the issue</i>
			X

Many of the interventions required to create the conditions to support people to adopt healthier behaviours, such as denormalisation of tobacco use, increasing physical activity are dependent on multi-sector collaboration. However, the benefits of these interventions can be substantial and hold relevance across the majority of the wellbeing goals.

For example, increasing physical activity levels in the population require a response across multiple sectors within many systems, such as education and the school setting, workplaces particularly in the statutory sector, the environment and urban and rural planning and transport, sports and leisure providers and the community. Efforts need to be coordinated in areas of high multiple deprivation where inactivity rates are highest.

The built environment includes land-use patterns, transport systems, urban design, green spaces and all buildings and spaces that are created by people, including schools, homes, workplaces and recreational areas. Most sustainable physical activity occurs during everyday activities within the built environment rather than for leisure.

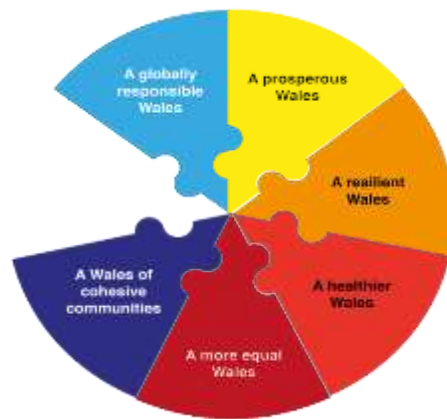
Creating and maintaining the built environment to be conducive to physical activity has a number of societal, economic and environmental benefits including climate change adaptation and mitigation, biodiversity, reduced traffic congestion, revitalisation of local shops and services and increased community cohesion and social interaction. Building physical activity back into daily routines requires a range of activities which together make active travel, leisure and incidental activity in daily routines the easiest, cheapest and most appealing options for people.

4.2 a) Integration – links with themes

<i>Economic</i>	<i>Social</i>	<i>Environmental</i>	<i>Cultural</i>
X	X	X	

Narrative included in the body of the text outline the connections which link these themes, but the pivotal issue is that we can create better levels of health and reduce ill health and disease prevalence through improving health behaviours. Good health and wellbeing enables people to contribute positively to family, community, and productivity.

4.2b) Integration –Contribution to the National Goal



Supporting Commentary

A reasonable level of health and wellbeing are prerequisites to people's ability to contribute effectively and positively to their community, society and economy. Systems level changes are required to create the conditions to facilitate health promoting behaviours.

4.3 Thinking to the Long Term

Please refer to this section for the [‘Life Expectancy’](#) section.

Short term (1-2)	
Medium term (2-5 years)	
Long term (10 years plus)	

There is a comprehensive public health evidence base which identifies interventions and actions which are cost effective, and which are anticipated to result in health gain in the short, medium and long term.

One of the ongoing difficulties with public health intervention is that in spite of being highly cost effective, many of the benefits are not seen except for in the long term. For example, the benefits of interventions which reduce prevalence of smoking in young people now, will not be seen within 10 years, because many of the more serious negative consequences to health of tobacco use do not materialise until older age. However, if we do not intervene now, the rate of preventable chronic conditions and cancer will continue to rise.

4.4 Prevention

Prevention - removing the causes of poor health and inequalities (rather than addressing the consequences) offers good value for money. Preventative policies and interventions save lives and money and improve peoples' mental, physical and social wellbeing. They show both short and long-term benefits far beyond the health system – across communities, society and the economy. A recent systematic review (Mason et al., 2016) suggests that both local public health interventions and nationwide programmes are cost-saving and offer substantial returns on investment (ROI). The overall median ROI was estimated at £14.3 for every £1 spent, ranging from a median ROI of £27.2 to £1 for nationwide public health interventions to a median of £4.1 to £1 for local public health interventions.

4.5 Involvement

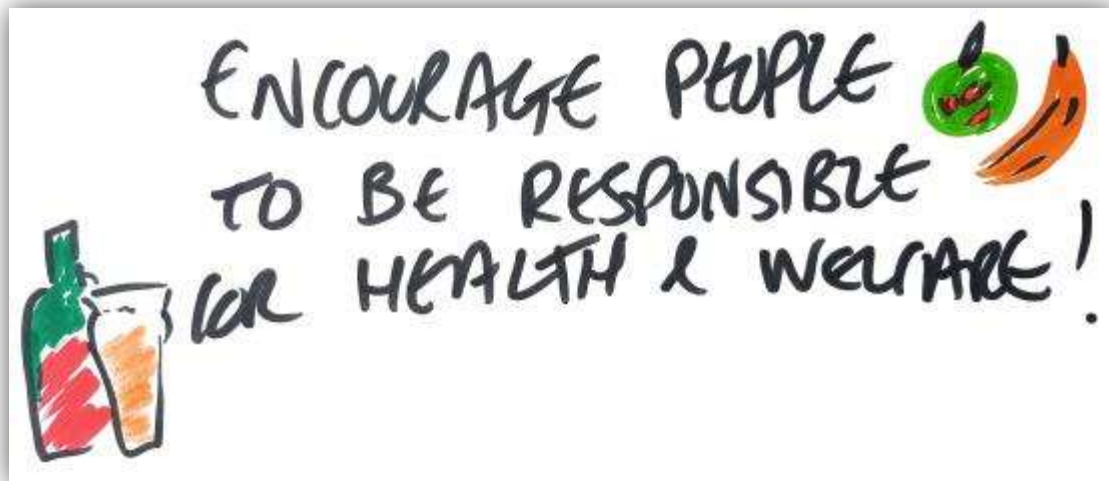
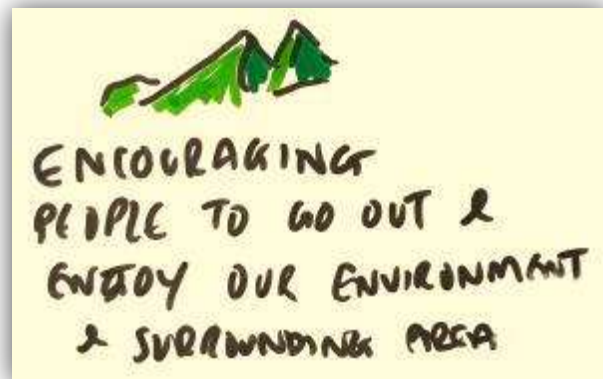
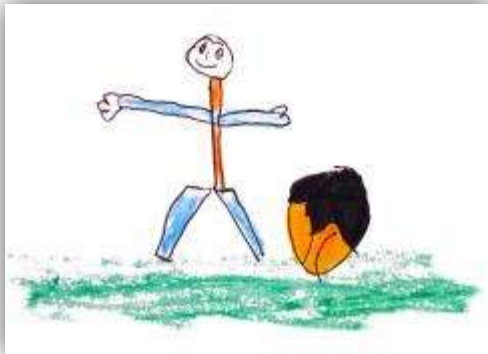
During the 'Blaenau Gwent We Want' Public Engagement Programme we received just 5 comments that were specifically about healthy lifestyles, these were about tackling obesity, reducing smoking and alcohol consumption, and healthy living in general.

However, some closely related subjects were very popular amongst those we engaged with. When we asked what things are important for people to live well and enjoy life our topic 'social activities' was 2nd highest with 53 comments (13%), 'health services' was 5th with 34 comments (8%) and 'exercise facilities' was 8th with 23 comments (6%). This shows that even though specific mention of healthy lifestyles was quite low, many things associated with a healthy lifestyle are very important to local people.

Examples of comments we received:



Selection of relevant images from 'Blaenau Gwent We Want' process



5. What is currently being done to tackle this issue?

5.1 Is this issue currently being tackled in partnership?

The critical issues highlighted at 2.4 are currently being explored jointly by the Healthy group within the single integrated plan overseen by the PSB. This work includes the following areas, which have an effect on life expectancy:

- Raise awareness to influence behaviour and lifestyle change
- Improving intervention methods to support reducing child obesity rates and improving healthy eating opportunities for communities
- Promote health, nutrition and active play within early years and school settings

5.2 What wider assets could assist in tackling this issue?

Wider assets that could be used to tackle the issue will be explored through further response analysis work dependant on priority setting of the PSB.

6. What this tells us about Well-being in Blaenau Gwent

Much of the disease burden in Blaenau Gwent is preventable and if people in Blaenau Gwent had healthier behaviours, the preventable disease burden would diminish in line with that of more affluent areas. Collectively, we need to create the conditions which enable and make it easier to adopt health promoting behaviours and habits and reduce behaviours which are hazardous to health. Creating these conditions requires systems level change and collaborative, coordinated, multi-agency working, which is difficult. However, if we don't do it, our services will be unsustainable and overwhelmed.

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Section 5.3: Baby and Children's Health and Development

1. Overview

We know that even before birth, factors which can affect a baby's healthy life expectancy and life chances are already taking effect. At present, children born into poverty are more likely to be adults with poor health than those born into affluence. A baby born to a mother who is obese and smokes throughout pregnancy, is at greater risk of developing unhealthy lifestyles in the future which render them at greater risk of serious chronic conditions which will impact on their quality of life and their life expectancy. The effect on a person's health and life expectancy, of childhood experiences and health behaviours continue to impact and accumulate throughout childhood and into adulthood.

It is of great concern that the difference in prevalence of good health between people living in the least and most deprived areas is already apparent at age 0-15 years. This gap then grows as age increases, peaking in males at age 65-74 (79% in least deprived vs 52% in most deprived) and in females at age 55-64 (84% vs 56%). This is inequitable and if unaddressed underpins and perpetuates cycles of poverty in our most deprived areas.

However, this cycle of poverty, as with some health inequities, is not inevitable, it is preventable.

2. What is the data saying?

2.1 At a Blaenau Gwent level

Low birth weight

Babies born with a low weight (defined as less than 2500g), are at a greater risk of problems occurring during and after birth. They also have an increased risk of chronic diseases in adulthood. The percentage of low birth weight live births across the Gwent region in 2014 ranged from 5.8% in Newport to 8.2% in Monmouthshire. In Blaenau Gwent the percentage was 7.5%; it is above the Wales percentage (6.7%). The number of live births in Blaenau Gwent with low birth weight was 58 in 2014 (Welsh Government 2016). A significant risk factor for low birth weight is maternal smoking.

Smoking in Pregnancy and early years

Currently in Wales one in five pregnant women smoke, resulting in higher risk of miscarriage, premature birth and low birth weight (PHW 2016 Making a difference). The rate of smoking in pregnancy is much higher in the lower age groups at 32% (under 20) and 27% (age 20-24), however rates in all age groups have fallen over the last decade.

Childhood exposure to tobacco smoke is of specific concern. One in five children aged 10-11 years are exposed to second hand smoke. Children are particularly vulnerable to second-hand smoke. They have smaller lungs, faster breathing and less developed immune systems, which make them more susceptible to respiratory and ear infections triggered by passive smoking.

The health of babies born into lower income households is disproportionately affected by second hand smoke. This can result in double the risk of sudden infant death, 50 percent higher risk of lower respiratory infections and asthma and 571 hospital admissions for children every year.

Teenage conceptions

Some teenagers are amazing parents and raise healthy, happy children who lead fulfilling lives. However, teenage pregnancies are associated with poorer wellbeing outcomes for the parent and the child. Teenage mothers are at greater risk of suffering from mental health issues during the three years following birth as well as having a low birth weight baby and higher infant mortality rate, compared to older mothers. Teenage pregnancy is a possible cause and a consequence of child poverty, which therefore perpetuates health inequalities. Higher teenage conception rates are associated with areas of higher deprivation and areas of higher unemployment. Having a baby before the age of 16 is associated with a lack of education and training, leading to poor socio economic conditions later in life. The children of teenage mothers tend to experience poorer outcomes as young adults. They tend to have a poorer educational attainment, greater risk from economic inactivity and are more likely to become teenage mother's themselves.

Across the Gwent region the rate of under 18 conceptions per 1,000 females aged 15- 17 in 2014 ranged from 14 in Monmouthshire to 28 in Torfaen. At 26 per 1,000, the rate for Blaenau Gwent is in line with the Wales rate (25). All local authority areas in the region have seen a significant fall in rates since 2010, mirroring the fall across Wales.

Healthy weight in pregnancy and early years

Maternal obesity and excess weight gain in pregnancy poses serious risks to the mother and child including: gestational and type II diabetes, pre-term deliveries, macrosomia, late foetal loss, stillbirth, congenital anomalies and increased neonatal intensive care. Managing healthy weight gain in pregnancy is important to reduce the risks in pregnancy and labour to mother and baby.

Rates of maternal obesity in Blaenau Gwent are likely to be higher than the 27% in the total population as a consequence of the areas having higher deprivation.

Outside of the Child Measurement Programme for Wales there is very little data available about overweight and obese in children and young people. There are no current data for whether a child grows steadily in the first year of life or first two years.

Breastfeeding

Breast feeding has benefits to both mothers and babies; it continues to be promoted as the most beneficial diet for babies. The presence of antibodies in breast milk helps to protect babies from common childhood illnesses. Breastfed babies are less likely to be admitted to hospital with infections and are more likely to grow up with healthy weight and without allergies (PHW 2016).

Exclusively breastfeeding infants, provides a wide range of benefits which begin immediately and track through to adult wellbeing. Breastfeeding produces benefits for the baby through reduced risk of infections, diarrhoea and vomiting, sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), childhood leukaemia, type 2 diabetes, obesity, and cardiovascular disease in adulthood.

Benefits of breastfeeding for the mother include lower risk of: breast cancer, ovarian cancer, osteoporosis, cardiovascular disease and obesity.

Furthermore breastfeeding and the early bonding and attachment it brings, promotes optimal brain development of the baby and emotional resilience which tracks through adolescence and in to adulthood positively impacting on a number of wellbeing factors.

In Blaenau Gwent, the proportion of babies exclusively breastfed at 10 days following birth is about 16% which is significantly lower than the Welsh average.

Rates of breastfeeding are higher at initiation and drop off steadily as babies' age increases towards 6 months. Deprivation is strongly associated with breastfeeding rates with lowest rates in our most deprived communities.

Trend data cannot be produced as the data are only recently of adequate quality to use, trends will be able to be produced in the future.

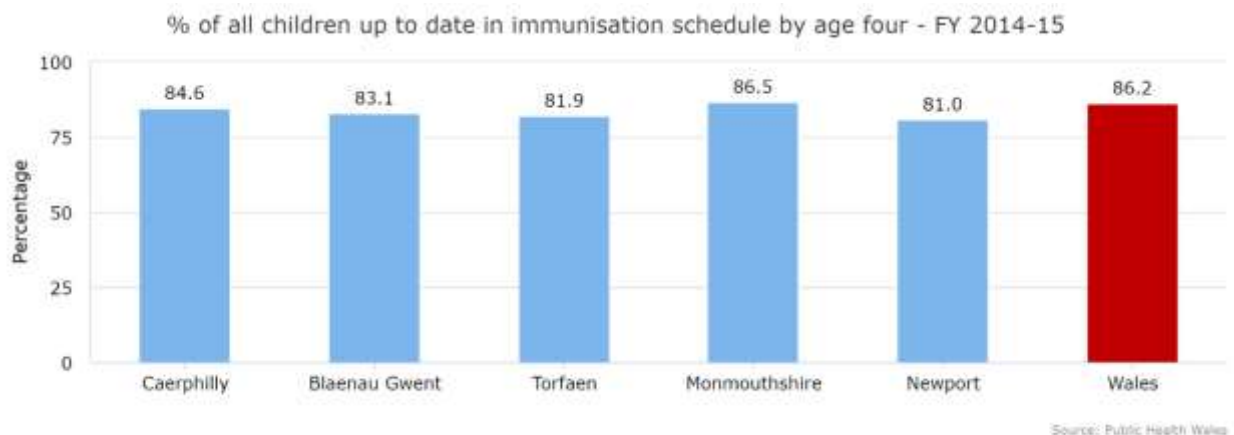
Childhood immunisations

The World Health Organisation estimates that 3 million lives are saved every year worldwide through immunisation alone. Vaccines are a very effective and needed public health protection intervention. Once common illnesses such as diphtheria and tetanus are now rare because of immunisation and whilst polio was declared eliminated in Europe through immunisation, the threat of other diseases such as measles and meningitis have not gone away in the UK today. Globally about 400,000 children die every year from measles alone even though it is almost entirely vaccine preventable.

In Blaenau Gwent immunisation coverage for all vaccines due by age one year are above 95 percent affording good community level protection against a variety of communicable diseases (COVER, Q2 2016/17). However, the percentage of children up to date in their immunisations by age four years, when children enter school, is considerably lower, at just 83% in Blaenau Gwent (Figure BCH01). This is considerably lower than the 95% uptake required to give community immunity, protection to those who are under-vaccinated. This is also lower uptake than for Wales as a whole (86%). This means many of the children in Blaenau Gwent are not protected against preventable infectious diseases, such as measles, which remain relatively common in Wales and remain vulnerable to infection when cases

occur, and increases our risk of outbreaks, which are costly to individuals and public services.

Figure BCH01: Percentage of children up to date with immunization schedule by age 4 years, local authorities and Wales

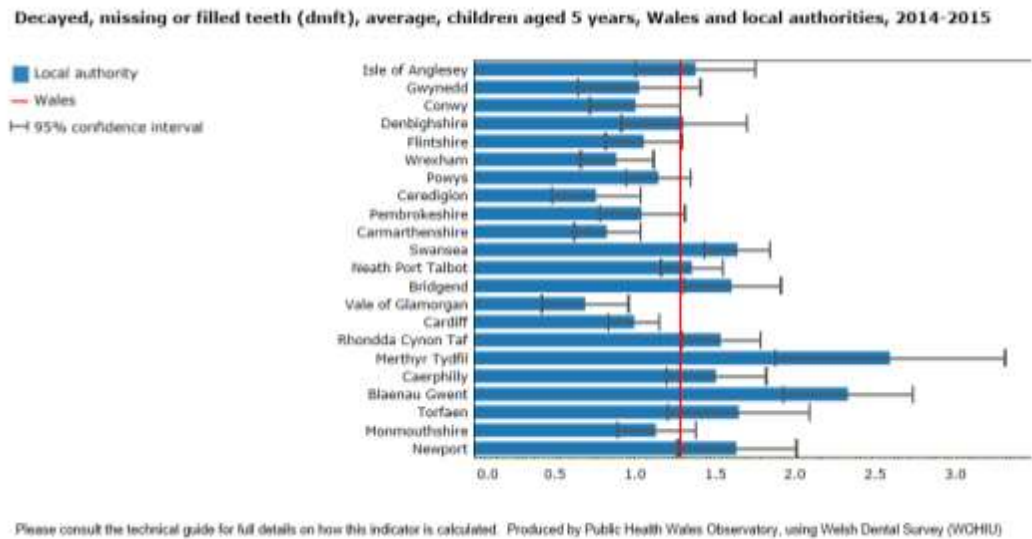


Oral health

Oral health is an indicator of a range of adverse life circumstances for children. Poor diets, often from birth, inadequate tooth brushing and infrequent visits to the dentist are the main causes of decayed, missing or filled teeth (DMFT) at age five years. Poor oral health can impact on health and well-being. There can be immediate problems resulting in pain and infection, but also other long term consequences on health. For example, for children poor oral health can make eating difficult, affecting nutrition and subsequently growth and development.

Figure BCH02 below summarises the Welsh Dental Survey for the average number of decayed, missing or filled teeth (DMFT) in children aged 5 years. In Blaenau Gwent the average number of DMFT was 2.3, which is higher than for the whole of ABUHB at 1.6, and statistically, significantly higher than the number for Wales as a whole 1.3 DMFT, in 2014-15.

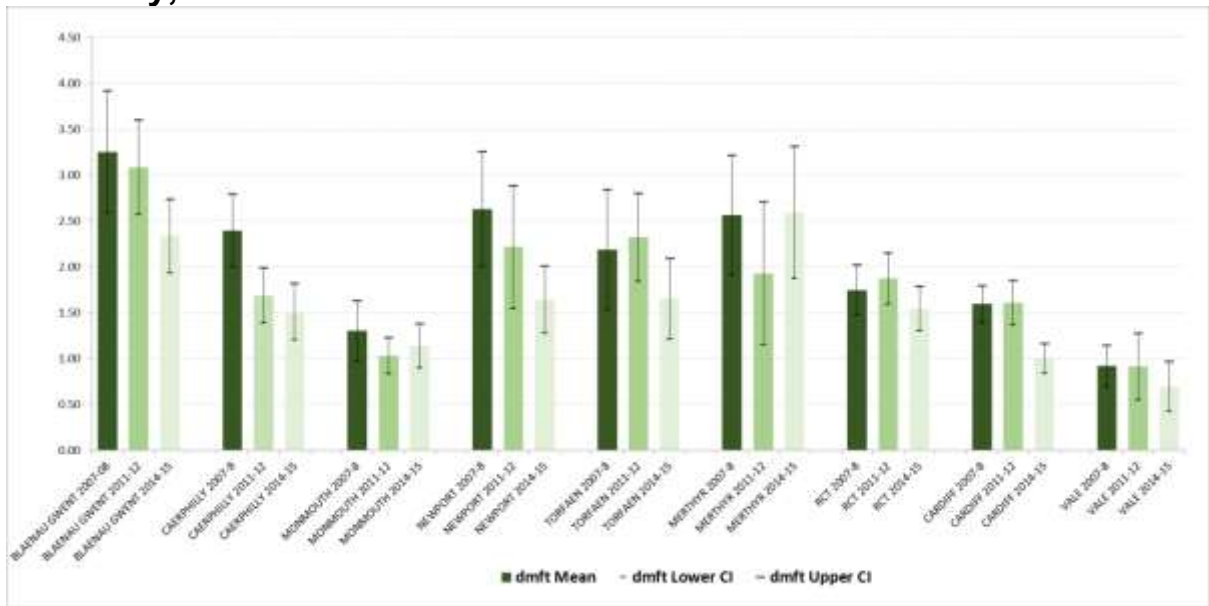
Figure BCH02: Decayed missing or filled teeth, average, children aged five years, local authorities and Wales



The Blaenau Gwent average number of DMFT per child is the second highest across local authority areas in Wales. Variation in average DMFT by local authority shows that oral health is also related to deprivation.

In Blaenau Gwent, mean DMFT has fallen over the last decade as illustrated in Figure BHC03.

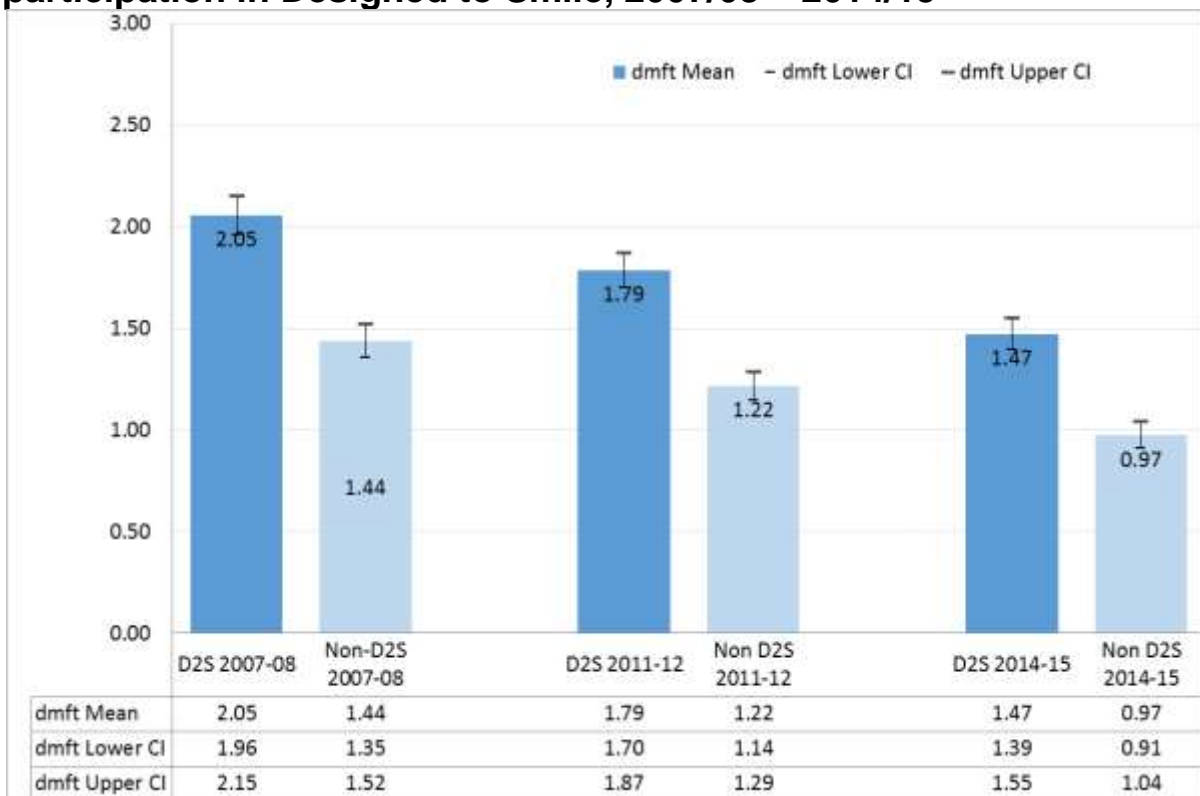
Figure BCH03: South East Wales – Mean DMFT trends by Unitary Authority, 2007/08 to 2014/15



Tooth decay is preventable. Designed to Smile is a targeted oral health promotion programme for Wales which is focussed on preventing dental decay in children in pre-school and primary school settings. Work to roll the programme out across the whole of Wales was commenced in 2010, focusing on areas with higher deprivation.

The last three survey samples included five year old children from schools involved in the initial Designed to Smile pilot and from schools that are now being included in the Designed to Smile programme as it is rolled out. It also surveyed children who are not taking part in Designed to Smile. Whilst these surveys were not specifically designed to evaluate Designed to Smile, and mean DMFT has reduced in all schools since 2008, it is notable that the reduction in mean DMFT is slightly greater in Designed to Smile Schools (Figure BCH04). A similar improvement pattern is seen in the proportion of children with experience of decay. This is encouraging and indicates participation in the programme across Blaenau Gwent would be beneficial.

Figure BCH04: Mean DMFT for children attending primary schools by participation in Designed to Smile, 2007/08 – 2014/15

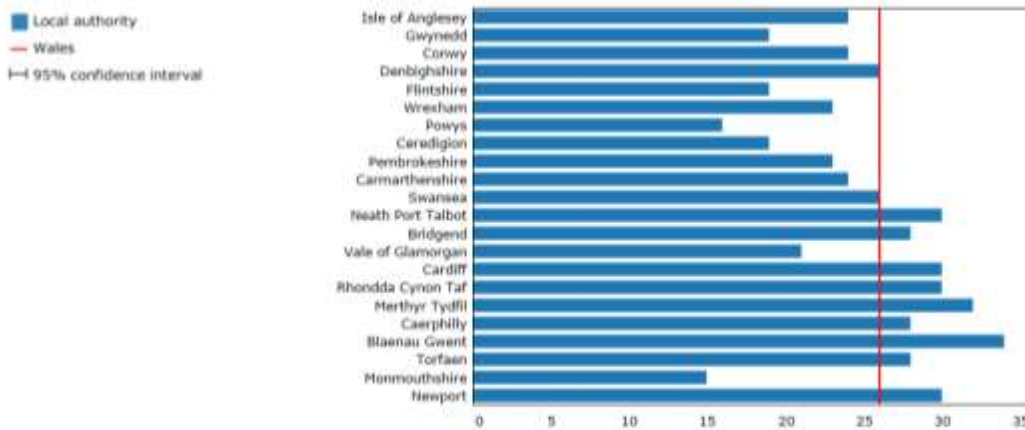


Other life circumstances related to child health and wellbeing: Child poverty

The root causes of families being in poverty are worklessness and low earnings (either not working enough hours or not being paid enough). Children in workless families are three times as likely to be living in relative poverty compared to families where at least one parent works, and they are more likely to go on to become adults living in poverty. Children in families with a disabled adult are over a third more likely to be in poverty than children in families with no disabled adult [22% compared to 16%] (Department for Work and Pensions, 2013). On average, people experiencing worklessness have worse health and poorer well-being. Ill health is one of the key family characteristics which make it harder for some poorer families to work their way out of poverty, as is having low qualifications.

Figure BCH05: Proportion of children living in poverty, local authorities and Wales

Children living in poverty, percentage, aged 0-18, Wales and local authorities, 2015



This is not based on the national indicator definition. Please consult the technical guide for full details on how this indicator is calculated. Produced by Public Health Wales Observatory, using Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) and small area population estimates (ONS).

Figure BCH05 shows the proportion of children and young people living in poverty is higher in Blaenau Gwent than any other local authority area in Wales, and the rate is considerably higher than the Wales rate.

Given the current levels of worklessness and the high proportion of adults with low educational qualifications in Blaenau Gwent, taking a preventative approach to tackle persistent, intergenerational poverty from occurring or getting worse is important.

The Childhood Poverty Strategy and Action plan for Wales highlight the importance of addressing factors which are barriers to parents working, and also raising the educational attainment of poor children since this is essential in breaking the cycle of poverty.

Key family characteristics which make it harder for some poor children to do well at school include a poor home environment, under-developed “character” skills (e.g. social skills, self-esteem, resilience), Special Educational Needs or disabilities or ill health, a parent being ill, having

parents with low qualifications, and low family income (HM Government 2014).

Education is an important determinant of health. People with more educational qualifications have usually had a good start in life and a supportive background suffering fewer adverse experiences, they have better jobs with more control and higher wages and they are able to engage better with services to keep well and use community assets enjoying more leisure and culture – they have better health and wellbeing. Parents with more educational skills and qualifications often recognize the value and set the conditions for their next generations.

Financial exclusion from contemporary society causes stress and stigmatization as well as exclusion from a range of cultural and leisure opportunities which also have a preventative effect on longer term health. When the breadth and strength of association between deprivation and health and wellbeing outcomes are considered, children living in poverty and their families have to be a target for more intense and more tailored-to-be-accessible interventions across this section of the wellbeing plan.

Adverse Childhood Experiences

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are chronic stressful experiences in childhood that can directly hurt a child (such as abuse or neglect) or affect them through the environment in which they live (such as growing up in a house with domestic violence or with individuals with alcohol and other substance use problems).

ACEs are known to have direct and immediate effects on a child's health. However, exposure to ACEs can alter how children's brains develop as well as changing the development of their immunological and hormonal systems. The psychological changes affect the body, thus increasing the risk of premature ill health such as cancer, heart disease and mental illness (eg

schizophrenia). There is also increased risk of developing poor mental wellbeing, in terms of how people feel emotionally and how they interact with others, including attachment. In addition, children who experience stressful and poor quality childhoods are more likely to adopt health-harming behaviours (for example smoking, problem drinking, poor diet, low levels of exercise and risky sexual behaviour), often during adolescence, which can themselves lead to increased risk of non-communicable diseases such as mental health illnesses and disease such as cancer, heart disease and diabetes later in life.

ACEs can also lead to individuals developing anti-social behaviours, including a tendency for aggressive and violent behaviour, and ultimately problems with criminal justice services. Individuals' engagement in education, their ability to gain qualifications and ultimately their contribution to the economy can all be affected by the combination of anti-social behaviour, difficulties with social adjustment and ill health.

ACEs tend to be 'passed down' through families and lock successive generations of families into poor health and anti-social behaviour. There are thus long-term, inter-generational benefits from breaking the cycle.

Preventing ACEs in future generations could reduce levels of heroin/crack cocaine (lifetime) use by 66%; incarceration (lifetime) by 65%, violence perpetration (past year) by 60%, violence victimisation (past year) by 57%, cannabis use (lifetime) by 42%, unintended teen pregnancy by 41%, high-risk drinking (current) by 35%, early sex (before age 16) by 31%, smoking tobacco or e-cigarettes by 24%, poor diet (by 16%).

Addressing ACEs also links with the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Act (Wales) 2015.

As the Figure BCH06 below shows, 47% of adults in Wales suffered at least one ACE during their childhood, and significantly 14% suffered 4 or more.

Figure BCH06: Prevalence of the number of ACEs in Wales

Number of ACEs	%
0	53
1	19
2-3	13
4+	14

These proportions are comparable to those found in other parts of the UK as well as further afield. It is also known that those living in areas of deprivation are at greater risk of experiencing multiple ACEs.

Figure BCH07 below illustrates what percentage had experienced each type of ACE. Verbal abuse was the most common, experienced by 23% of individuals.

Figure BCH07: Prevalence of individual ACEs experienced

	Individual ACEs	%
	Parental separation	21
Child abuse	Verbal abuse	23
	Physical abuse	17
Household dysfunction	Sexual abuse	10
	Mental illness	14
	Domestic violence	16
	Alcohol abuse	14
	Incarceration	5
	Drug abuse	5

In Wales the impact of ACEs may include being responsible for nearly a quarter of current adult smoking, over a third of teenage pregnancy and more than half of the violence, heroin/crack use and incarceration reported. ACEs could also be responsible for almost a third (27%) of adults reporting low mental wellbeing.

Prevalence of harmful behaviours increases with the number of ACEs experienced, even after accounting for socio-demographics (age, sex, ethnicity and deprivation), as shown in Figure BCH08 below.

Figure BCH08: Number of times those with 4+ ACEs more likely to have harmful behaviours than those with no ACEs

	Number of times
High-risk drinker	4
Had or caused unintended teenage pregnancy	6
Smoked e-cigarettes or tobacco	6
Had sex under the age of 16 years	6
Smoked cannabis	11
Victim of violence over the last 12 months	14
Committed violence against another person in the last 12 months	15
Used crack cocaine or heroin	16
Incarcerated at any point in their lifetime	20

Adults with four or more ACEs were five times more likely to have low mental well-being than those with no ACEs.

2.2 At a neighbourhood area level

Neighbourhood data in relation to the majority of the issues discussed in this section are unavailable. However, in the main, there is a correlation between deprivation and higher rates of smoking in pregnancy, lower uptake rates of immunisations, poorer dental health in children and higher rates of ACEs experienced. Since the majority of neighbourhoods in Blaenau Gwent are in the lower quintiles of deprivation in Wales, action is required across the whole of the area.

2.3 Interpretation of data

Health data regarding smaller numbers have a greater level of uncertainty regarding their accuracy and can therefore be less meaningful. It is also resource intensive to create reports on lower level health data, which give no benefit due to the overwhelming levels of deprivation across the Borough.

2.4 What are the critical issues for public services to consider?

- Cross agency work to encourage take up of initiatives aimed at improving immunisation rates in children.
- Review the impact of current programmes aimed at early years intervention in order to maximise reach and impact across the borough
- Cross agency work to encourage take up of initiatives to reduce DMFT rates (Decayed, Missing, Filled Teeth) amongst children across the borough (within schools and through direct work with parents linked to the Designed to Smile programme)
- Further investigation and analysis of the rate and impact of ACEs at lower geographical levels e.g. the Neighbourhood Care Network operated by Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (NCN) to enable more effective focus of cross agency programmes
- Review current programmes aimed at tackling the impact of poverty across the area in order to improve targeting and impact

3. What research exists to help us develop a response to this/ these issues?

In terms of value for money as well as quality of life, there is considerable evidence to support early interventions, in the first 1000 days of life, which optimise the potential for good health in the future and minimize the risk of harm. Some of the key indicators in the first 1,000 days as discussed include childhood poverty, low birth weight, smoking in pregnancy and maternal weight. Other indicators of health outcomes are as described, such as child dental health and immunisation rates. There is increasing evidence that adverse childhood events (ACE) have lasting impact on a child's physical as well as psychological development, which means their impacts on a person's health and wellbeing are long term.

A Welsh ACE Survey was undertaken in 2015 by Public Health Wales in collaboration with Liverpool John Moores University. Although data are not available at a local level, it identified that prevention of ACEs is likely not only to improve the early years experiences of children born in Wales but will also reduce levels of health-harming behaviours across the life course.

Investing in early years universal (population wide) interventions along with additional resource proportionate to need for vulnerable children is cost-effective and essential to ensure a healthy and productive Wales.

Investing in targeted interventions, universal child care and paid parental leave could help address as much as £72 billion worth of the cost of social problems such as crime, mental ill health, family breakdown, drug abuse and obesity for Wales.

4. Five ways of working

4.1 Collaboration

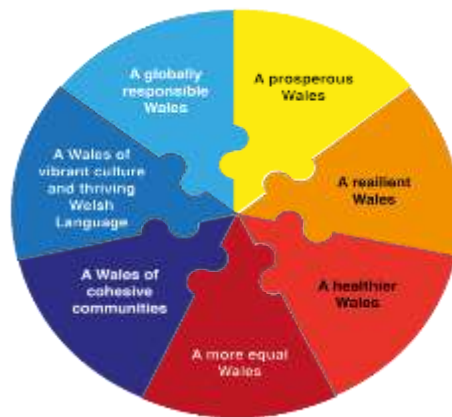
<i>Adds no value</i>	<i>Adds some value</i>	<i>Adds moderate value</i>	<i>Critical to tackle the issue</i>
			X

The issues identified in '[Healthy Lifestyles](#)' also apply to this section. Systems level working and actions are required across many organisations, simultaneously, to create the conditions which give children and young people equal opportunities and to reach their potential.

4.2 a) Integration – links with themes

<i>Economic</i>	<i>Social</i>	<i>Environmental</i>	<i>Cultural</i>
X	X	X	

4.2b) Integration –Contribution to the National Goal



Supporting Commentary

The health and wellbeing outcomes of children can be optimised or negatively impacted before they are even born. Inequities at birth are unjust and actions to address these inequities are important if we aim for a fairer society. Children require both good physical health and mental wellbeing to benefit optimally from the educational opportunities available to them.

Children of today will become the citizens on whom we rely upon to create economic prosperity, resilient and vibrant communities in the future.

4.3 Thinking to the Long Term

Consider the known / likely / potential impact on well-being in the short, medium and long term.

Short term (1-2)	
Medium term (2-5 years)	
Long term (10 years plus)	

Many of the areas discussed can have immediate impact on individuals' lives. E.g. Un or under-vaccinated children are at risk of vaccine preventable diseases. This risk is significantly reduced within weeks of vaccination. High uptake rates can prevent outbreaks.

Collaborative approach to examine the evidence of what works to prevent ACEs and implementation/research as appropriate. A particular focus on the first 1000 days would be beneficial in the targeting of resources and services.

Interventions which address poverty and ACEs can impact in the medium term and protect children from future harms.

Breaking a cycle of multiple ACEs a child is exposed to in families where parents were exposed to multiple ACEs, should impact on the wellbeing of these children through their life course and potentially, future generations. This is also the case where families are supported and parenting skills are improved. Intervention now can significantly prevent adverse events in the future and provide a basis for better wellbeing in the longer term.

4.4 Prevention

A focus on the first 1,000 days, and early intervention give the best value in terms of public health. Immunisation is highly cost effective at preventing vaccine preventable disease and should be promoted widely.

Evidence based programme such as 'Designed to Smile' are available and it is important we overcome any local barriers to implementation across Blaenau Gwent systematically, so all children may benefit from them.

ACEs may be prevented through:

- enhanced public and professional awareness
- evidence-informed universal service specifications
- effective pathways into additional support, monitoring of intervention coverage and content
- routine audit of fidelity to intervention specifications.

4.5 Involvement

During the 'Blaenau Gwent We Want' Public Engagement Programme we received very limited feedback specifically about baby and child health and development, however there was 1 comment about how Flying Start is an asset to the community and 3 comments were about the need for more quality childcare in the area.

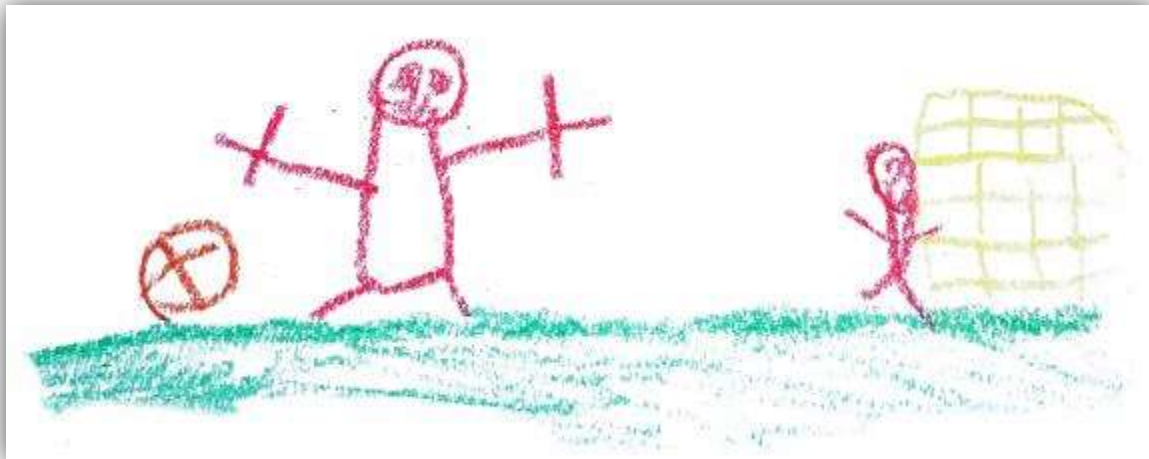
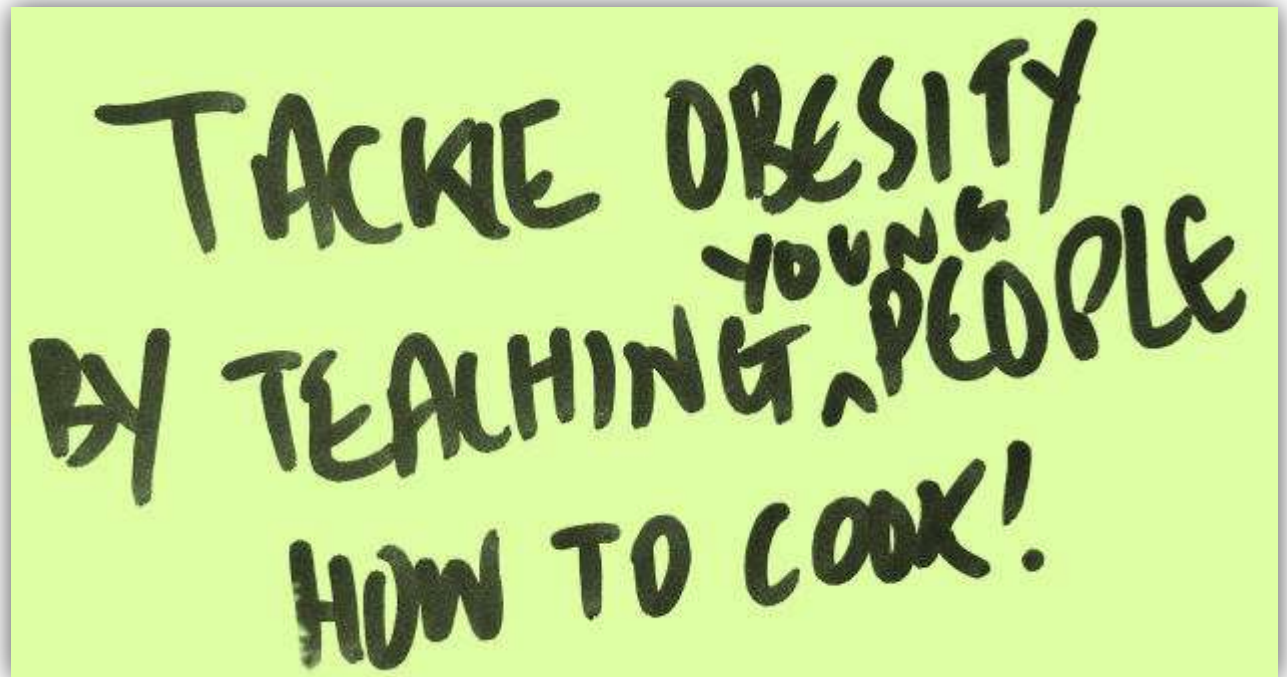
Social activities, particularly for children and young people, was one of the most popular comments received during the programme, most commonly stating that there was a lack of things for children and young people to do within the area.

When we asked people 'what would make Blaenau Gwent a better place' our topic 'health services' was the 6th most popular comment with (119 comments, 4%) and children we spoke with were more likely to say that health services needed to be improved than adults (6% compared to 4%).

Furthermore, during the [Play Sufficiency Assessment](#) children and young people from throughout Blaenau Gwent were engaged in relation to play within their local communities. Some of the key issues identified were;

- Fear for their own safety while playing outside; fear of bullies, general safety etc;
- Play areas are littered with rubbish and dog mess;
- Parents preventing children playing outside due to safety concerns;
- Children increasingly staying at home playing computer games, using social media etc.

Selection of relevant images from 'Blaenau Gwent We Want' process



5. What is currently being done to tackle this issue?

5.1 Is this issue currently being tackled in partnership?

The critical issues highlighted at 2.4 features four that are currently being explored by the Healthy Group within the single integrated plan overseen by the PSB. This work includes the following areas:

- Raise awareness to influence behaviour and lifestyle change (whole population approach)
- Improving intervention methods to support reducing child obesity rates and improving healthy eating opportunities for communities
- Promote health, nutrition and active play within early years and school settings

5.2 What wider assets could assist in tackling this issue?

Wales is already pioneering a range of national policies and programmes which aim to:

- Identify and intervene where children may already be victims of abuse, neglect or living in adverse childhood environments;
- Better equip parents and care-givers with the necessary skills to avoid ACEs arising within the home environment and encourage development of social and emotional well-being and resilience in the child;
- Ensure that indirect harms from for instance, domestic violence, substance use and other mental and behavioural problems in the family setting are identified, addressed and their impact on children minimised.

The **Building a Brighter Future: Early Years and Childcare Plan 2013-2023** and **The Healthy Child Wales programme** set out the policy framework and plan for supporting families to ensure their children attain their health and developmental potential and aims to increase family resilience.

Health visitors across Wales work in partnership with families to meet these goals, assess resilience and provide support to meet their needs.

There are a number of national **tackling poverty programmes** targeted at the most deprived communities in Wales including Flying Start, Families First and Communities First. Flying Start is the Welsh Government's Early Years programme for families with children less than four years of age. Core elements of the programme are: free quality, part-time childcare for two-three year olds; an enhanced health visiting service; access to parenting programmes; speech, language and communication support. Those families assessed as experiencing substance misuse, domestic violence or abuse, a history of violent or abusive behaviour or mental health issues can be referred to the Integrated Family Support Services.

Together for Mental Health – a Strategy for Mental Health and Well-being in Wales sets out the policy framework for tackling low mental well-being which is committed to person-centred holistic care, engaging in all aspects of a person's life. This includes:

- the promotion of mental well-being and, where possible, preventing mental health problems developing
- joint-working across sectors to address the range of factors in people's lives which can affect mental health and well-being.

Also, the **Together for Children and Young People programme** is a multi-agency service improvement programme which was established to consider ways to reshape, remodel and refocus the emotional and mental health services provided for children and young people in Wales, in line with principles of prudent healthcare.

The strategy acknowledges that tackling problems such as poverty and drug and alcohol misuse are important, as well as making sure people have strong communities, healthy schools, good workplaces and strong relationships.

The collective initiative **United in Improving Health** aims to ensure co-ordinated system-based working across public services, voluntary and private organisations at a national and local level. Through United in Improving Health, Wales can exploit assets not just in the health systems but the professionals, volunteers and other resources that make up our schools and workplaces, housing, police, fire and rescue services. United in Improving Health is re-aligning these assets to accomplish a shared set of goals. The first of these is improving outcomes in the early years, with a focus on the first two years of life.

6. What this tells us about Well-being in Blaenau Gwent

Children in Blaenau Gwent currently have some of the worst health outcomes in Wales. It is imperative that action is taken to address these inequities, if children in Blaenau Gwent are to be given equal life chances in the future. Based on the evidence available, our best efforts to achieve this is to focus on maternal health, before, during and after pregnancy, investing in the first 1000 days (from conception to the second birthday).

Early child development interventions should go beyond child survival and physical development to encompass social, emotional and cognitive development.

Both universal and targeted follow up interventions later on in a child's and teenager's life are important in order to maintain the gain in early years, with a particular focus on preventing ACEs.

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Section 5.4: Emotional Health and Well-being

1. Overview

The World Health Organisation states ‘there is no health without mental health’. Our mental well-being can be seen as a resource for life, influencing how we think and feel about ourselves and others, how we interpret events and consequently how we behave and function in day to day life. The Mental Health Foundation cites that one in four adults and one in ten children are likely to have mental health issues in any one year. This has a profound impact on the quality of peoples’ lives affecting ability to form/sustain relationships, ability to work in paid employment, and at worst the ability even to get through a day.

In the United Kingdom mental health issues are responsible for the largest burden of disease, 23% of the total burden, compared to 16% each for cancer and heart disease. Common mental health issues such as depression and anxiety are more prevalent among people experiencing greater economic disadvantage (Mental Health Foundation 2015).

Promoting well-being and preventing mental health problems is a crucial element of wider public health strategy, since a person’s mental health influences and is influenced by a broad range of social, economic, cultural, environmental and wider health factors.

There is compelling evidence to indicate that action to improve mental well-being and reduce mental illness across the population results in a wide range of health and non-health outcomes including: higher educational achievement, reduced unemployment and worklessness, reduced reliance on welfare and disability benefits, higher productivity in the workplace, reduced crime and anti-social behaviour, better social relationships and community

involvement and reduced costs to health and social services (Joint Commissioning Panel for Mental Health, 2015).

In the same context, poor mental wellbeing, sense of poor self-image, social ostracism or bullying and real or perceived stigma, jeopardizes cohesion and social sustainability. Mental ill health is associated with worse physical health, increased health risk behaviours, poor education and unemployment. It accounts for a substantial burden of ill health and disability in Wales with high costs to the NHS, society and the economy. As such, this theme is intrinsically linked to the Well-being Goals and many of the other population health priority themes.

Inequality is a key determinant of mental ill health and mental ill health leads to further inequality. In Wales, 24% of those who are long term unemployed or have never worked, report a mental health condition compared with 9% of adults in managerial and professional groups.

2. What is the data saying?

2.1 At a Blaenau Gwent level

Nearly a quarter (23%) of the total burden of disease in the UK is attributable to mental disorder. This compares to 16% for cardiovascular disease and 16% for cancer (World Health Organisation, 2008). Over three quarters of mental health problems have emerged by the age of twenty, making childhood determinants primary in future mental well-being.

Data regarding Welsh population mental well-being and trends over time is limited and not comparable with other countries due to differences in data collection. The main data sources available are outlined below.

Mental well-being in children and young people

Information to describe mental well-being in children and young people is not routinely available at a local authority level. The Health Behaviour of School-aged Children (HBSC) Survey 2013-14 (Welsh Government, 2015) asks a number of relevant questions, the findings for Wales are outlined below:

- 18% of children said they had felt nervous more than once a week in the past 6 months.
- 18% of children said they had felt low more than once a week in the past 6 months.
- Among year 11 pupils (aged 15-16 years), 84% boys and 73% girls rated their life satisfaction as 6 or higher on a scale of 1-10.
- Over a third of pupils reported being bullied at school in the past two months.

Mental health problems in children and young people

Data is not collected on prevalence of mental health problems in children and young people. Numbers of children and young people with any mental health problem can be predicted by applying estimated UK prevalence to ABUHB population projections (data extracted from the Daffodil system). Estimations

of prevalence are based on the report 'Mental Health of Children and Young People in Great Britain 2004, National Statistics, 2005' as follows:

10% of children and young people aged 5-15 had at least one clinically diagnosed mental disorder. The most prevalent disorders included:

- Anxiety and depression: 4%
- Conduct disorder: 6%
- Hyperkinetic disorder: 2%
- Less common disorders (including autism, tics, eating disorders and mutism): 1%

This data reveals that prevalence of mental health problems appears to be greater in boys (11%) than girls (8%) and to increase with age.

Figure EH01 below shows the predicted number of children in ABUHB aged 5-15 with any mental health problem (Daffodil system, July 2016).

Figure EH01: Children aged 5-15 predicted to have any mental health problem, projected to 2020

Area	2015	2020 (projected)
Aneurin Bevan University Health Board	6,919	7,220
Blaenau Gwent	766	795
Caerphilly	2,208	2,274
Monmouthshire	1,045	1,018
Newport	1,842	1,985
Torfaen	1,058	1,148

Source: Daffodil System, July 2016

Early life experiences, such as bullying or abuse, may have long-term consequences for the development of children and young people, with associated costs to society and public services. In Wales, in 2013/14, over a third of pupils reported bullying at school in the previous two months.

Mental well-being in adults

The main source of data offering a perspective on mental health and illness in the area is the Welsh Health Survey.

Mental well-being is measured in the Welsh Health Survey using the SF-36 questionnaire, which produces a Mental Component Summary (MCS) score. Higher scores indicate better health. Figure EH02 below shows the average MCS scores for each local authority area, compared with Gwent and Welsh average.

Figure EH02: Mental Component Summary scores (SF-36)

Wales	49.4
Gwent	48.9
Blaenau Gwent	47.0
Caerphilly	48.2
Monmouthshire	50.6
Newport	49.6
Torfaen	48.7

Source: *Welsh Health Survey, 2014 + 2015, age standardised, persons aged 16+*

This indicates that on average adults in Blaenau Gwent have slightly worse mental health than for Gwent or Wales as a whole.

Mental health problems in adults

The Welsh Health Survey reveals that 14% of people in the ABUHB area report being treated for a mental illness, the vast majority of which is anxiety and depression. These figures have remained relatively stable since 2013/14. Figure EH03 shows the breakdown for each local authority area, and shows in Blaenau Gwent the percentage of those treated for mental illness is slightly higher than for Gwent or Wales as a whole. It illustrates a slightly higher rate than all for Gwent or Wales as a whole.

Figure EH03: Adults who reported currently being treated for a mental illness (%)

Wales	13
Gwent	14
Blaenau Gwent	17
Caerphilly	16
Monmouthshire	11
Newport	13
Torfaen	15

Welsh Health Survey, 2014 + 2015, age standardised, persons aged 16+

The Welsh Health Survey SF-36 scores have been transformed to give an indication of the number of cases of mental disorder (Figure EH04). This indicates that there are a much greater proportion of people experiencing a common mental illness (anxiety and / or depression) than those seeking treatment (28% vs 14% in the Gwent area), and this is consistent with findings of psychiatric morbidity surveys in England. There are many reasons for this including: stigma of mental health problems, lack of accessible / acceptable help, and lack of awareness of the need to seek help.

Figure EH04: Percentage of adults free from a common mental disorder (2013-14)

Wales	74
Gwent	72
Blaenau Gwent	66
Caerphilly	70
Monmouthshire	78
Newport	74
Torfaen	69

Source: Public Health Wales, *Our Healthy Future Indicators* (2015)

<http://howis.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/922/page/65519>

Overall in Wales, a greater percentage of females than males report being treated for a mental illness, and females also report poorer wellbeing than males (Public Health Wales, 2016).

There is also a strong link between deprivation and poor well-being / being treated for a mental illness, with 8% of the people in the least deprived quintile reporting a mental health condition, compared with 20% in the most deprived quintile (Public Health Wales, 2016). This report also found that 24% of those who are long term unemployed or have never worked, report a mental health condition compared to 9% of adults in managerial and professional groups in Wales.

Suicide and self-harm

Each year in Wales between 300 and 350 people die from suicide. This is about three times the number killed in road accidents. Although relatively rare, suicide has a devastating impact on all concerned. It is estimated that for every person who dies through suicide at least six others are significantly and directly affected (Talk to Me 2: Suicide & Self-harm Prevention Strategy Wales 2015-2020).

Suicide is one of the three leading causes of death in the 15-44 age group; the other two being road traffic injuries and inter-personal violence. Notably it is the second leading cause of death among young people in the 15-19 years age group. Men are around three times more likely to die by suicide than women (Talk to Me 2: Suicide & Self-harm Prevention Strategy Wales 2015-2020).

In Wales suicide rates were highest in males in the 30 to 49 year old age groups during 2003 to 2012. There is a secondary but lower peak amongst elderly males of 80 years plus. For females, the highest rate is seen in 30 to 34 year olds and 45 to 54 year olds (Talk to Me 2: Suicide & Self-harm Prevention Strategy Wales 2015-2020).

Among both males and females there is an association between suicide and deprivation. Rates are higher in our more deprived communities and this gap appears to be widening in Wales. This is consistent with existing literature and highlights that suicide prevention should address inequalities that exist in society (Talk to Me 2: Suicide & Self-harm Prevention Strategy Wales 2015-2020).

It is important to note that suicide statistics and trends need to be interpreted with caution because the small numbers, delays in registration and inconsistencies in recording cause of death can produce unreliable rates. This is especially relevant to comparisons of annual fluctuations and small area / population group rates. Comparisons across different countries are difficult to make because of differences in coding and cultural differences in the classification of intent.

The European age-standardised rate per 100,000, people aged 10 years and above, for suicide from 2010 to 2014, was 13. This was slightly higher than for other local authority areas in the Gwent area and Wales, but not

statistically significantly higher (Public Health Wales Observatory 2016, Public Health Outcomes reporting framework).

Self harm is one of the top five reasons for medical admission in the United Kingdom and results in significant social and economic burden due to the utilisation of health services, particularly with respect to unscheduled hospital care, to treat the injury/ overdose. The UK has one of the highest rates of self-harm in Europe (Talk to Me 2: Suicide & Self-harm Prevention Strategy Wales 2015-2020).

In 2010 there were 4,450 individuals admitted to inpatient care in Wales following self harm. Some individuals are admitted more than once in any year. This does not take into account those assessed in A&E departments who do not require admission, or the many more who do not attend following an incident of self harm. The true scale of self harm is estimated to be 1 in every 130 people. The age and pattern of self harm shows that young women aged 15-19 have the highest prevalence with some evidence of an increase in males over 85 (Talk to Me 2: Suicide & Self-harm Prevention Strategy Wales 2015-2020).

Dementia

Data is not collected on dementia prevalence. The best available data we have is predicted numbers of people with dementia and early onset dementia, generated by applying estimated UK prevalence rates to population projections (data extracted from the Daffodil system, September 2015).

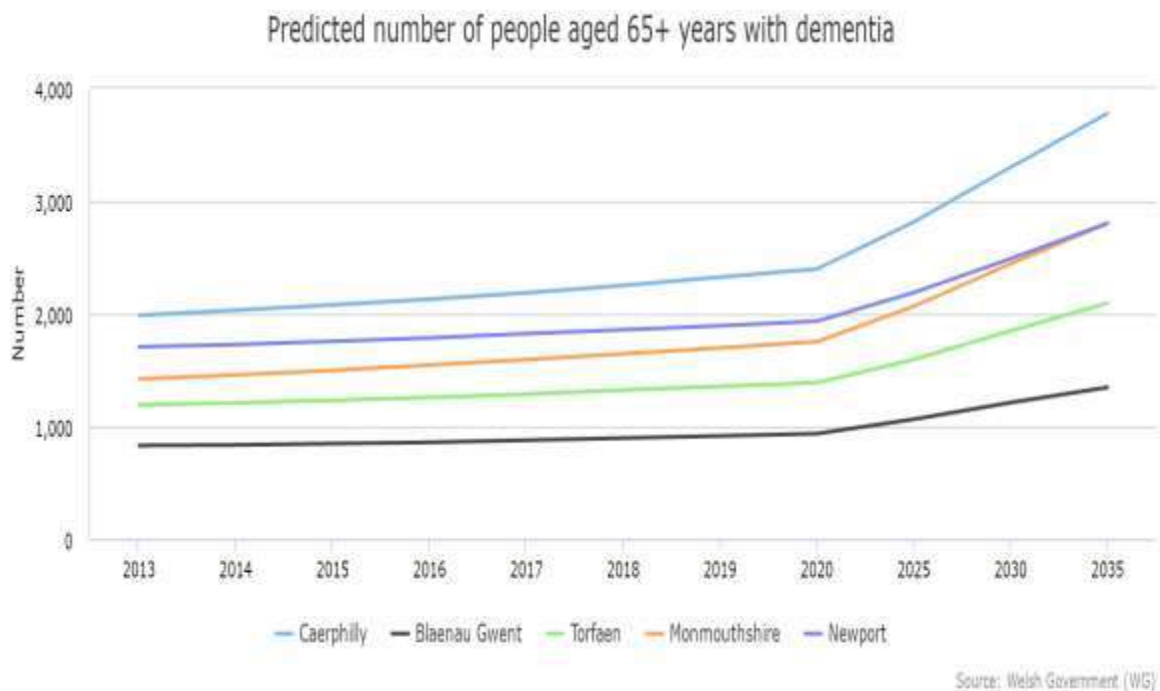
The prevalence of early onset dementia is relatively low (less than 1% in males and females). The data shows that in 2015, 152 people aged 30-64 in ABHB area are predicted to have early onset dementia (Daffodil system, September 2015). Predicted numbers to 2030 are relatively stable.

The prevalence of dementia in the 65 and over population increases steadily with age, from 1.5% (males)/1% (females) in the 65-69 age range, to 19.5% (males)/25% (females) in the 85+ age range. The total numbers of over 65s in ABHB predicted to have dementia increases from 7,414 in 2015 to 11,298 in 2030 (Daffodil system, September 2015). This rise is linked to increasing life expectancy leading to a higher proportion of older people in the population.

The predicted number of cases of people aged 65 years and over with dementia at local authority level is outlined in Figure EH05. Prevalence is predicted to increase sharply as life expectancy increases and more people live for longer.

There are currently just over 37,000 people living with dementia in Wales. Dementia is more common as people age with one in 14 people over 65, one in 6 people over 80 and one in 3 people over 95 has a form of dementia. In 2013 there were approximately 900 people age 65+ living with dementia in Blaenau Gwent. This is projected to rise to over 1,300 people by 2035 (Welsh Government) as illustrated in Figure EH05 below. This rise is linked to increasing life expectancy leading to a higher proportion of older people in the population.

Figure EH05: Dementia



2.2 At a neighbourhood area level

There is limited lower level data on the indicators relating to mental health and well-being. However, the key factor is that even where variation can be identified, the data for all parts of Blaenau Gwent suggest worse mental well-being than for Wales as a whole. Interventions to improve mental well-being are therefore relevant across the whole area.

Due to low numbers, lower level data regarding suicide would be unlikely to demonstrate any statistically significant difference between one area and another.

There is no available data regarding dementia at neighbourhood level published nationally. However, given the association with age and the potential future associated needs and demand on services it is likely that individual organisations will have modelled future needs in relation to dementia, and it would be helpful if data were shared to facilitate collaborative working.

2.3 Interpretation of data

Several data sets, mostly self reported suggest that fewer people in Blaenau Gwent than for Wales as a whole have good mental wellbeing and the absence of mental ill health. This is not surprising given the association between mental ill health and deprivation.

It is worth noting that estimates of mental wellbeing in children and young people are extrapolated from Wales-wide data and may not reflect fully the effect of deprivation levels in Blaenau Gwent.

Events of suicide occur in small numbers. Therefore, it is difficult to draw meaningful inferences from trend or comparative data at the local authority level or below.

2.4 What are the critical issues for public services to consider?

Promoting well-being and preventing mental health problems is a crucial element of wider public health strategy, since a person's mental health influences, and is influenced by, a broad range of social, economic, cultural, environmental and wider health factors. Our mental well-being can be seen as a resource for life, influencing how we think and feel about ourselves and others, how we interpret events and consequently how we behave and function in day to day life. As such, this theme is intrinsically linked to the Well-being Goals and many of the other population health priority themes in this document.

Mental wellbeing is a key component underpinning resilience. Improving mental health and wellbeing is essential if aspirations for a more prosperous and resilient Blaenau Gwent as well as a fairer and healthier Blaenau Gwent are to be realised.

Given the data, it is likely that there is considerable unmet need in Blaenau Gwent in relation to mental wellbeing.

Further analysis of the impact of poor mental health and well being at a neighbourhood level could improve the development and targeting of cross organisation improvement programmes.

In relation to the predicted growth in dementia rates, linked to rising numbers of older people within the population, there need to be effective links with the work of the regional, cross agency Dementia Board which is leading a number of workstreams including the deployment of dementia support workers, dementia champions and community based dementia friendly initiatives.

Noting the impact and prevalence of the challenges posed by individuals who have a 'dual diagnosis' (both a mental health and substance misuse problem) the impact at an area level of work lead by the regional Area Planning Board on regional substance misuse service provision needs to be reflected upon in the development and delivery of services at a borough level.

As a means of positively impacting on the personal and economic well-being of the area's residents, both the local authority and Health Board, as large employers, need to examine options for providing learning and employment opportunities, including apprenticeships and volunteering, to improve the life chances of residents.

3. What research exists to help us develop a response to this/ these issues?

There is compelling evidence to indicate that action to improve mental well-being and reduce mental illness across the population results in a wide range of health and non-health outcomes including: higher educational achievement, reduced unemployment and worklessness, reduced reliance on welfare and disability benefits, higher productivity in the workplace, reduced crime and anti-social behaviour, better social relationships and community involvement and reduced costs to health and social services (Joint Commissioning Panel for Mental Health, 2015).

An effective approach to population mental well-being includes a **combination of interventions across the life course** which:

- Promote well-being and develop resilience
- Prevent mental illness
- Identify and treat mental illness at the earliest possible opportunity

The Faculty of Public Health (2016) describe some important principles underpinning population mental health action:

Promoting mental well-being moves the focus away from illness and concentrates on an individual's resilience, social purpose, autonomy and ability to make life choices. Engaging with communities to frame issues and solutions and build on assets is central.

The social, cultural, economic and environmental determinants of mental health need to be considered and addressed.

In order to prevent widening health and social inequalities, interventions should be applied in a universally proportionate way, with a whole population well-being approach and additional support for groups at higher risk of mental health problems.

Personal risk and protective factors are determined in early childhood, primarily in the context of family relationships, so a life-course approach is essential. In addition, we know that interventions at different life stages interact with each other and can have a cumulative effect.

Research in Wales into the association between Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), mental well-being and health harming behaviours within the adult population.

[http://www2.nphs.wales.nhs.uk:8080/PRIDDocs.nsf/7c21215d6d0c613e80256f490030c05a/d488a3852491bc1d80257f370038919e/\\$FILE/ACE%20Report%20FINAL%20\(E\).pdf](http://www2.nphs.wales.nhs.uk:8080/PRIDDocs.nsf/7c21215d6d0c613e80256f490030c05a/d488a3852491bc1d80257f370038919e/$FILE/ACE%20Report%20FINAL%20(E).pdf)

Investing to increase access to early intervention mental health services could lead to considerable savings for other public services. Interventions for children and young people, especially the most vulnerable, could lead to long-term savings by reducing the risk of health and social problems and by improving employment prospects.

Anti-bullying interventions in schools can return £15 for every £1 spent; parenting programmes to prevent conduct disorder return £8 over six years for every £1 invested (PHW 2016)

‘Best buys’ to prevent mental ill health can include interventions and policies to support parents and young children; to improve workplaces; to change lifestyles; to provide social support and to support communities through environmental improvements. More specifically:

Starting well *(links to Areas 1 - ACEs & 2 – prevention of health harming behaviours):*

- Promotion of parental mental and physical health,
- Support after birth,
- Breastfeeding support,
- Parenting support

Developing well *(links to Areas 1 - ACEs & 2 – prevention of health harming behaviours)*

- Pre-school and early education programmes (improved school readiness, academic achievement, positive effect on family outcomes)
- School-based mental health promotion programmes (reduced levels of mental disorder, improved academic performance, social and emotional skills).
- Neighbourhood interventions including activities which facilitate cohesion and community empowerment
- Debt advice and enhanced financial capability
- Physical activity through active travel, walkable neighbourhoods and active leisure
- Integrating physical and mental well-being through universal healthy lifestyle programmes
- Interventions to enhance social interaction (capital) activities such as arts, music, creativity, learning, volunteering and timebanks
- Positive psychology and mindfulness interventions, interventions to increase mental health literacy and encourage early help-seeking for mental health problems (i.e. in ABUHB, implementation of Foundation Tier work)
- Spiritual awareness, practices and beliefs.

Working well

- Work-based mental health promotion
- Work-based stress management, including early recognition and intervention for mental health problems
- Support for unemployed people.

4. Five ways of working

4.1 Collaboration

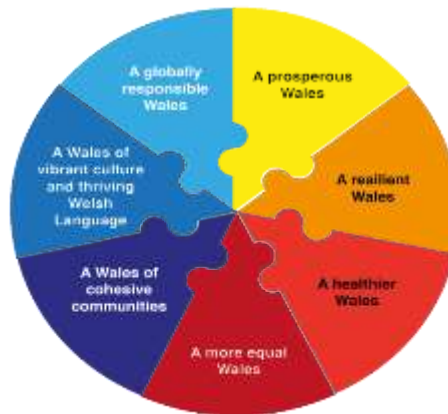
<i>Adds no value</i>	<i>Adds some value</i>	<i>Adds moderate value</i>	<i>Critical to tackle the issue</i>
			X

Factors effecting mental health and wellbeing are multi-faceted and a systems level approach is required to improve wellbeing is required Creating the conditions for better metal health and wellbeing requires clear collaboration across all sectors. Actions to break intergenerational cycles of poverty and ACEs, action to support parents and which increase resilience require a collaborative approach. Similarly, other parts of the public services system are required to improve access to green outdoor spaces in Blaenau Gwent, which will promote mental wellbeing and facilitate other health promoting behaviours such as increasing physical activity levels.

4.2 a) Integration – links with themes

<i>Economic</i>	<i>Social</i>	<i>Environmental</i>	<i>Cultural</i>
X	X	X	X

4.2b) Integration –Contribution to the National Goal



Supporting Commentary

Mental well-being is absolutely essential for individual's to function and contribute optimally to their community and society. Good well-being enables people to function and contribute, but also to benefit from the advantages which life provides. Well-being is required to optimise the potential for learning throughout the life course, which gives people life chances.

4.3 Thinking to the Long Term

Improving mental health early in life will reduce inequalities, improves physical health, reduces health-risk behaviour and increases life expectancy, economic productivity, social functioning and quality of life. The benefits of protecting and promoting mental health are felt across generations and accrue over many years (Royal College of Psychiatrists, 2010). Promotion and prevention is also important in adulthood and older years, with people in later life having specific mental health needs.

The number of adults living with low mental well-being in Wales could be reduced by more than a quarter (27%) if no individuals in Wales were exposed to harmful experiences in childhood. In other words, eradicating ACEs in Wales could potentially reduce the number of individuals who report low mental wellbeing by just over 100,000, with an associated reduction in costs (Public Health Wales, 2016).

Implementing NICE guidance on Promoting the quality of life of looked after children and young people (2010a) is likely to lead to long-term savings from reduced risk of mental health problems, reduced rates of offending or contact with the criminal justice system and increased employment opportunities when the child or young person reaches adulthood and becomes independent. In the short-term, earlier access to mental health services could lead to more immediate savings for local authorities by increasing placement stability and reducing numbers of placement moves.

Early access to mental health interventions is likely to reduce the need for emergency hospital admissions related to self harm or other potentially life-threatening presentations. Whilst savings are not costed, the report points to, for example, the estimated average annual treatment costs for a person with depression are £2210 (McCrone et al., 2008), the estimated average cost incurred per crime is £12,625, the estimated annual cost per man in a local

prison is £27,275 and the estimated annual cost per woman in a local prison is £42,477 (ESRC Society Today, 2009 as referenced in NICE 2010b).

<i>Short term</i> <i>(1-2)</i>	
<i>Medium term</i> <i>(2-5 years)</i>	
<i>Long term</i> <i>(10 years plus)</i>	

4.5 Involvement

During the 'Blaenau Gwent We Want' Public Engagement Programme our topic 'Mental Health' was given to 32 comments in total (1%). The main theme emerging was a lack of services and support for people with Mental Health Services with some particular reference to services for men and young people. The topic was the 28th most popular (31 comments, 1%) when we asked what would make Blaenau Gwent a better place.

No comments were received in relation to mental health within the Sirhowy Valley; other valley areas saw a similar level of comments.

Examples of comments we received:



Many factors that would tend to have a positive impact on emotional health and well-being were rated very highly when we asked people what was special about Blaenau Gwent: such as our natural landscape (130 comments, 21%), communities (102 comments, 17%), parks (74, 12%) and quality of exercise facilities (29, 5%). However, factors known to have a negative effect on emotional health and well-being such as employment and income, safety and community cohesion were identified as things that needed to be improved within the area.

Selection of relevant images from 'Blaenau Gwent We Want' process

Fully
Autism
Aware.

MORE ACTIVITIES FOR
PEOPLE WITH LEARNING
DIFFICULTIES

5. What is currently being done to tackle this issue?

5.1 Is this issue currently being tackled in partnership?

The critical issues highlighted at 2.4 do not directly feature within the single integrated plan's current delivery plans. However, the Learning Partnership and Healthy Partnership are exploring how they can look to support vulnerable learners to improve their emotional well-being.

5.2 What wider assets could assist in tackling this issue?

There will be a wide range of assets, risk and protective factors for mental well-being which will also be useful for building a picture of individual and community well-being and resilience.

The National MWIA Collaborative (2011) have produced a [mental well-being checklist](#) based on research into key protective factors for mental health

Also see references below, for example, National MWIA Collaborative (2011), page 118; Joint Commissioning Panel for Mental Health, 2015, page 26.

6. What this tells us about Well-being in Blaenau Gwent

People in Blaenau Gwent have poorer mental wellbeing than for the population of Wales as a whole. This is unsurprising since inequality is a key determinant of mental ill health. The challenge for Blaenau Gwent is that poor wellbeing and mental ill health lead to further inequality and is associated with poorer physical health and increased health-risk behaviours, poor education and higher levels of unemployment. To achieve the aspiration for better wellbeing in Blaenau Gwent, and all of the benefits associated with this, will requires a balanced programme of work which fundamentally addresses inequalities, poverty, improved educational outcomes as well as specific elements which reduce ACEs, and improve resilience, such as parenting support.

Having said this, investing to increase access to early intervention mental health services could lead to considerable savings for other public services. Investment in mental health interventions for children and young people, especially the most vulnerable, is likely to lead to long-term savings by reducing the risk of mental health problems, rates of offending and contact with the criminal justice system and by improving employment prospects.

Section 5.5: Ageing Well

1. Overview

Older people's concerns and interests have been raised throughout this Well-Being Assessment. In this section there is a focus on creating a positive future for older people, using the five themes related to the Ageing Well in Wales programme (which defines older people as those aged 50+). These themes include:

- Falls prevention
- Dementia Supportive Communities
- Opportunities for learning and employment
- Loneliness and isolation
- Age Friendly communities



It is clear that the number and proportion of people aged 65 and over is set to rise. It is important to recognise that the older population is very diverse in nature with many people remaining fit and active. Older people also provide a significant amount of their time and energy caring for others:

- Data from the 2011 survey shows that more than one third of unpaid carers in Blaenau Gwent aged over 65 provide 50 or more hours of care per week to people who are disabled or infirm;
- There are increasing numbers of people in their 80s caring for spouses / others who require support;
- Many people aged 50 and over now have additional caring responsibilities, with working families increasingly relying on grandparents to care for younger children whilst at the same time caring for elderly relatives.

However, the prevalence of physical and sensory impairments and ill health does rise significantly with age:

- Around 45% of adults over state pension age are disabled, compared with 6% of children and 16% of working age adults.

It is vital to recognise this in terms of enabling people to age well - promoting healthy lifestyles, enabling the right support, ensuring that physical barriers are minimised and negative perceptions of disability are challenged.

2. What is the data saying?

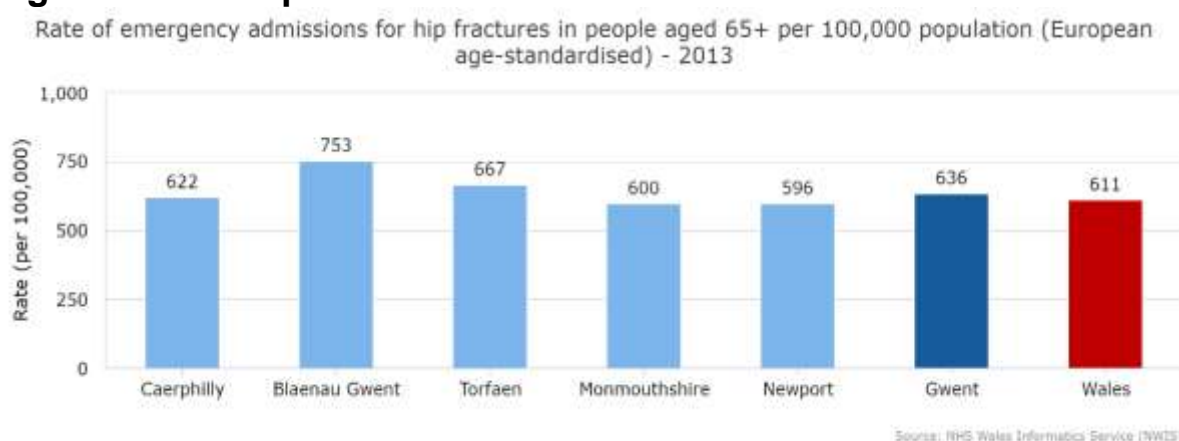
The Gwent-wide Population Needs Assessment outlines the current position related to those in need of care and support (see Well-being Assessment section '*Care and Support*'). This overlaps with the Ageing Well in Wales themes and the performance of Blaenau Gwent in relation to these is outlined in more detail below.

2.1 At a Blaenau Gwent level

Falls prevention

Falls are estimated to cost the NHS more than £2.3 billion per year. One indicator related to falls amongst older people is the number of recorded hip fractures. The table below (illustrating the most up to date comparable data) shows that the rate of emergency admissions for hip fractures in people aged 65+ years in 2013 for Blaenau Gwent was 753 per 100,000 population, higher than other area in the region.

Figure AW01: Hip Fractures



Dementia Supportive Communities

Figure AW02 shows the number of people with dementia in Blaenau Gwent is estimated to be 869, increasing to 1110 in 2021, based on prevalence data provided by the Alzheimer's Society.

Figure AW02: Dementia

	Current						2021 projection					
	30-64	65-74	75+	Total	% of people 65+ with dementia	% of all people with dementia	30-64	65-74	75+	Total	% of people 65+ with dementia	% of all people with dementia
Blaenau Gwent	19	133	717	869	7.15	1.27	20	172	918	1110	7.13	1.53
Wales				36532						47995		

Source: Alzheimer's Society

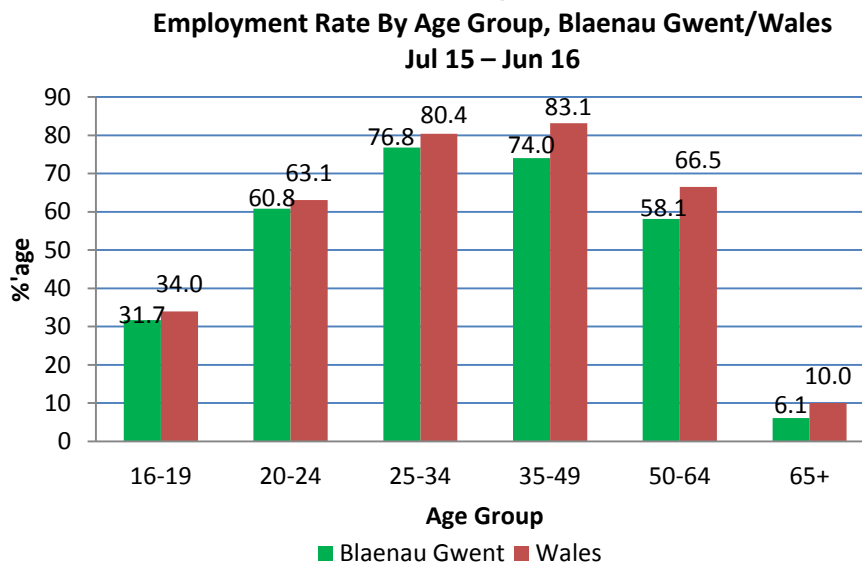
At a national level, dementia is the single most frequent cause of admissions to care homes; a quarter of hospital beds are occupied by people living with dementia and it forms the largest need for community care services for older people.

Opportunities for learning and employment

Older people will make up a greater proportion of the workforce in the future. Between 2014 and 2024 the UK will have 200,000 fewer people aged 16 to 49 but 3.2 million more people aged 50 to State Pension age.

In Wales, the graph below shows that the number of people in employment declines from age 35, dropping significantly from age 50. The gap between those in employment compared with the Wales average is also greater as people age.

Figure AW03: Employment Rate by Age Group



Volunteering

As well as contributing to society and promoting individual wellbeing, volunteering can be a vital stepping stone into the workplace. Recent studies suggest:

- the annual value of regular formal volunteering is £23.9 billion
- the 'wellbeing value' to frequent formal volunteers themselves is around £70 billion per year.

There is evidence that those aged between 45 and 79 are the most likely to have volunteered in Wales (almost one third), and 12% of volunteers are people aged over 80. It is clear that older people form a considerable and valuable part of the volunteering community, and this is likely to increase with changing demographics.

Loneliness and isolation

Loneliness and social isolation are harmful to our health: recent research shows that lacking social connections is as damaging to our health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day.

Locally, the recent engagement exercise with service users related to the Population Needs Assessment showed that 47% of people aged 65 and over said they did feel part of their local community; 20% said they did 'sometimes', and 20% said they did not.

Nationally, an Office for National Statistics survey in 2015 showed that those aged 80 and over are twice as likely to report feeling lonely (a rating of 6 or more out of 10) than those in the working age and the 65 to 79 age group (29.2% compared to 14.8% and 14.5% respectively). Those who live alone, rent or are widowed are most likely to report being lonely. This risk will be compounded by the likelihood of more single pensioner households due to increased divorce / changing lifestyles.

Age Friendly communities

Ageing Well in Wales has adopted the World Health Organisation model that describes the eight domains or aspects of life we need to consider in making places more age-friendly.



These domains are: outdoor environments; transport and mobility; housing; social participation; social inclusion and non-discrimination; civic engagement and employment; communication and information, and community and health services.

This underlines the significance of these themes to older people across the Wellbeing Assessment. It is crucial that this is recognised in the Wellbeing Plan, especially given the ageing population and the increasing proportion of people who are very old.

It is clear that employment levels in Blaenau Gwent amongst those aged 50 and over are not what they should be. Whilst there has been a slight

increase over the last 3 years, this lags behind the higher increase of people aged 50 and over in employment across the whole of Wales.

The Older People's Commissioner for Wales has set out guidance for Public Services Boards, including a range of wellbeing indicators for older people. Some of these indicators are available and have been included in this assessment. Other recommended indicators are not readily available in an age based format and targeted work needs to be undertaken to ensure this information is available for the Wellbeing Plan.

2.2 At a neighbourhood area level

Data at a neighbourhood level has not been analysed for this measure but will be explored if identified as a priority for the PSB on 24 April 2017.

2.3 Interpretation of data

The impact of falls on individuals and the public purse is noticeable. The data outlined above show an increase in falls in Blaenau Gwent, however, this does need to be regarded with some caution, as there has been a range of development work since the data was produced.

For people who have already had a fall, in addition to the falls service (within the local Community Rehabilitation Team), there is a specialist Falls Clinic and direct access physiotherapist (funded by a local cluster of GPs) based at Neville Hall Hospital.



A dementia supportive community is an essential component in providing a safe accessible environment and improving the quality of life for people with dementia and those who support and care for them.

2.4 What are the critical issues for public services to consider?

There is still much work to be done to reduce falls. Raising awareness of falls prevention across sectors and within the community needs to be a priority, though additional resources may be required for this.

In Blaenau Gwent tackling loneliness and isolation is a high priority and this is also reflected in the Gwent Population Needs Assessment.

In 2013, Blaenau Gwent's Local Services Board signed up to the Dublin Declaration, which includes a commitment to work towards adopting the World Health Organisation principles to make communities age friendly.

Developing Age Friendly Communities requires an inclusive approach to all forms of current service provision and future planning. It relies on multiple strands of work to address attitudes as well as physical barriers. There needs to be a strong focus on co-production, community empowerment and participation with older people across all of the wellbeing themes.

Continuing to support the development of Dementia Friendly Communities will be important for public services to address, given that future trend data indicates that the number of people living with dementia is set to increase in Blaenau Gwent.

The Gwent Population Needs Assessment also sets out how the needs of older people requiring support will be addressed.

3. What research exists to help us develop a response to this/these issues?

Some research has already been undertaken and is featured within the body of this document. Further research will be undertaken dependent on priorities determined by the Public Service Board on 24 April 2017.

4. Five ways of working

4.1 Collaboration

<i>Adds no value</i>	<i>Adds some value</i>	<i>Adds moderate value</i>	<i>Critical to tackle the issue</i>
			X

Falls, loneliness and isolation, developing age friendly and dementia friendly communities are challenging issues that will require a significant amount of partnership working, collaboration and new and innovative ways for public services to implement improved service delivery.

Many of these issues are not new and will require building on existing partnership work which is currently being delivered to support both Welsh Government's National Strategy for Older People and the Older People's Commissioner for Wales' Ageing Well in Wales Programme.

4.2 a) Integration – links with themes

<i>Economic</i>	<i>Social</i>	<i>Environmental</i>	<i>Cultural</i>
X	X	X	X

Economic

- Ensuring there are learning and employment opportunities available for older people.
- Ensuring there are effective transport links to places of employment for older people

Social

- Ensuring communities are safe, and older people feel safe.
- Homes and households are affordable, accessible and are of a quality standard for older people
- Ensuring there are effective transport links for older people to reduce loneliness and isolation.
- Strengthening interconnectivity opportunities to improve communication and information networks which support older people (including digital inclusion agenda)

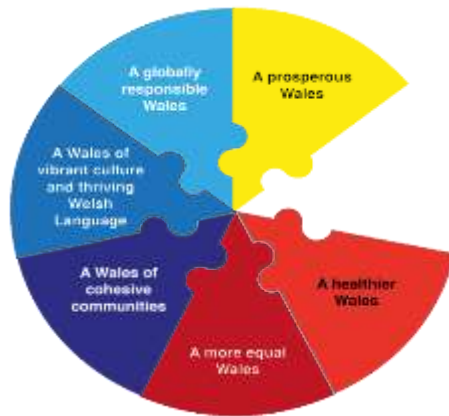
Environmental

- Creating age-friendly outdoor spaces and buildings which are accessible (including residential and urban landscapes) for older people.

Cultural

- Creating communities where there is respect and social inclusion (community cohesion between different generations)
- Ensuring older people are able to participate effectively in social activities

4.2b) Integration –Contribution to the National Goal



Supporting Commentary

Prosperous - Links with developing appropriate learning and employment opportunities available for older people.

Healthier- Links with enabling older people to be able to live healthy lifestyles and have an increased healthy life expectancy.

Equal- Links with 'age' being one of the nine protected characteristics covered by the Equalities Act 2010.

Cohesive - Links with ensuring there are age-friendly, dementia-friendly outdoor spaces and buildings (including residential and urban landscapes) which are attractive, safe and well-connected. Links with ensuring all generations of Blaenau Gwent are well-connected.

Culture & Language- Links with developing intergenerational opportunities which promotes the sharing of culture and heritage. Links with enabling older people to be able to participate effectively in social activities (such as the arts, sports and recreation).

Globally Responsible- Links with ensuring Blaenau Gwent realises it's commitment towards delivering the Dublin Declaration of Age-friendly Cities and Age Friendly Wales which is part of the Global Age-friendly Cities Programme developed by the World Health Organisation.

4.3 Thinking to the Long Term

Ensuring Blaenau Gwent's communities are able to age well, and given the impact of an ageing population has on well-being, the following issues should be considered within the timeframes outlined below:

<i>Short term</i> <i>(1-2)</i>	Falls, loneliness & isolation
<i>Medium term</i> <i>(2-5 years)</i>	Dementia Friendly Communities
<i>Long term</i> <i>(10 years plus)</i>	Age Friendly communities

4.4 Prevention

Falls Prevention – falls are a major cause of disability and death in older people, and result in significant human cost in terms of pain, loss of confidence and independence. Therefore, preventative action which helps older people to maintain their health and well-being, live longer in their own homes and remain active in their communities is key.

There is also a significant financial cost to health and social care services associated with dealing with the results of falls. Evidence suggests that falls prevention can reduce the number of falls by between 15% and 30%, and that well organised services, based on national standards and evidence-based guidelines, can prevent falls and reduce death, disabilities and fractures.

Early intervention initiatives for those older people at risk of falling for the first time should look to support an older person's well-being as well as addressing specific identified risk factors for falls.

Evidence suggests that the cost benefit of implementing preventative initiatives greatly outweighs the cost of providing reactive services to treat older people who have suffered a fall. For example, installing adaptations within a home, such as a hand rail, will cost far less than the cost of an older person being admitted to hospital for one day. Also, cost benefits of preventative initiatives are far wider, in that installation of a hand rail can lead to improved quality of life and increased confidence etc.

Loneliness and isolation – these issues have been shown to be far reaching in that they can be damaging to health and are the basis for social exclusion. Whilst eradicating loneliness and isolation may be unrealistic, the identification and tackling of the root causes is not.

Research demonstrates that loneliness has an effect on mortality that is similar in size to smoking 15 cigarettes a day. It is associated with poor mental health and conditions such as cardiovascular disease, hypertension and dementia. Loneliness also has a much wider public health impact too, as it is associated with a number of negative health outcomes including mortality, morbidity, depression and suicide as well as health service use.

Given the budgetary reductions to community and public services, often seen as “lifelines”, older people are at an increased risk of loneliness and isolation, sometimes referred to as the “silent killers”. Without the means to leave their homes, or with fewer visits from community workers and service providers, an increasing number of older people will feel lonely and isolated resulting in damaging effects to their mental health.

4.5 Involvement

During the 'Blaenau Gwent We Want' Public Engagement Programme we received a total of 33 comments specifically related to older people; almost half of which (14, 42%) were about Social Care and a further 6 (18%) were about Health Services.

Although demographic data was not collected from most respondents, we did identify 45 comments that were specifically from people who were 50 and over; of these: Health Services (6, 13% comments), Public Transport (5, 11%) and Community (4, 9%) were the most popular topics overall.

During the engagement programme we also engaged directly with older people within Extra Care Homes throughout the area. During our conversations 2 key issues emerged;

Information & Communication: Most communication is by email - a large proportion of older people said that they do not have access to IT equipment or the Internet - new ways of sharing information with the community need to be developed.

"Information helps you to feel better and more involved in your community."

Transport: This was the biggest barrier to inclusion and active participation in the community for the older people we spoke with, affecting access to employment, learning, and all aspects of life.

Selection of relevant images from 'Blaenau Gwent We Want' process

HEALTH SERVICES FOR OLDER PEOPLE

A Good bus service 24/7
Circuit of Wales.
Something for the kids.
Better provisions for old people.
More pubs.



5. What is currently being done to tackle this issue?

5.1 Is this issue currently being tackled in partnership?

Partnership working is fundamental to addressing the key issues identified for older people living in Blaenau Gwent. Included within the Single Integrated Plan are key work programmes and interventions being delivered by the Healthy, Fair & Safe, Learning for Well-being and Thriving & Vibrant Partnerships which sets out key targets for delivering improved outcomes for older people. Examples of which are highlighted below:-

- Fair & Safe Partnerships – Doorstep Crime Campaign Programme which looks to raise older people's awareness about scams and swindles in order to increase community resilience and safety.
- Healthy Partnerships – Delivery of Living Well, Living Longer project (for people aged 50+) and other similar initiatives which look to encourage healthy lifestyles and behaviours (such as increased participation in physical activity), therefore improving older people's healthy life expectancy, increasing mobility, and mental health etc.
- Learning for Well-being Partnership – Undertaking a review of whether the existing curriculum and training opportunities across Blaenau Gwent meets the needs of all 'learners', and enables people to access the right labour market employment pathways.
- Thriving & Vibrant Partnership – Delivering initiatives to strengthen and improve access to employment opportunities for all (including older people).

Furthermore, agencies across Blaenau Gwent have been working together for some time to address the objectives related to the National Strategy for Older People and the Ageing Well in Wales programme. Reporting to the Public Services Board, this work is overseen by the multi-agency 50+

Stakeholder Group and related 50+ Engagement Group. There has also been close working with the Office of the Older People's Commissioner since its inception.

Recently a fundamental review has taken place, in order to improve the governance and accountability of the 50+ Stakeholder Group. For this coming year the priorities of the group are to improve:

- engagement with older people
- information provision

Falls prevention

Activity within Blaenau Gwent related to falls prevention includes, for example:

- A Care Home Resource guide has been developed through the Gwent Frailty Programme: *'Action to Reduce Falls and Fractures in the Care Home'*
- Blaenau Gwent Care and Repair offer advice on trips and falls prevention through their 'Managing Better' service.
- An Exercise Referral Programme is managed by Aneurin Leisure. However, there is evidence this might be under-utilised.

Dementia Supportive Communities

. We are building on good foundations in Blaenau Gwent:

- from April 2015 to September 2016 there has been a focus on Tredegar in building a dementia supportive community:

Figure AW04: Dementia Training

Training Awareness &	Target 15/16	Actual 15/16	Target 16/17	Actual Q1 & Q2	TOTAL
Dementia Friends	500	1209	1000	608	1817
Dementia Friends sessions	-	35		50	85
Dementia Champions	8	19	10	3	22

This is already extending beyond Tredegar and development work is underway in other communities. Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council also has plans to introduce dementia awareness training for staff.

- There have been wider initiatives that benefit people locally, such as the training of all police as dementia friends, and training amongst Melin, Tai Calon and United Welsh Housing Association staff.
- There are more places for people with dementia and carers to get together for support, such as dementia cafes.
- A new user-led group has also formed: 'Blaenau Gwent Friends of Dementia', which is chaired by a person living with dementia. This is an excellent example of co-production in practice.



Dementia has been highlighted in the Gwent Population Needs Assessment. A Gwent- wide Dementia Strategy is about to be released for consultation. A national Dementia Strategy has also just been made available for consultation: *Together for a More Dementia Friendly Wales 2017-2022*.

Loneliness and Isolation

. There are a number of local activities and services, for example:



- Community Connectors are expanding their role to work with older and disabled people within extra care environments
- Age Cymru Hospital Discharge Service gather information on people who live alone and any relevant risk factors
- Sight Cymru enables mutual support groups for people with sight loss
- Care & Repair are running a project "Staying Healthy at Home" working with GPs to access people who may not be in contact with services - offering them advice, information and signposting.
- Work is ongoing to implement the DEWIS information service.

- Community Connectors are mapping the range of befriending services and other services that can connect people to their local community.
- Improving information delivery to older people is a key priority action for Blaenau Gwent's 50+ Stakeholder Group for 2017/18, especially those who have difficulty accessing information. This work will involve staff from the Information Advice and Assistance team, Community Connectors, representatives from Registered Social Landlords and across the voluntary sector.

It is, however, clear from local consultation and wider research that key building blocks to reduce isolation and loneliness include:

- Accessible housing / supported housing and care homes in 'connected' locations
- Effective, affordable public transport
- Tackling crime and anti-social behaviour - and the fear of these

Many of these issues affect the whole community, but have a particular impact on older people with a huge cost to society - they need to be a high priority in building a connected community.

Opportunities for Learning and Employment

Employment

There are local programmes of work in place that seek to address this, and some of these are linked to initiatives in the Welsh Government's *Tackling Poverty Action Plan; Building Resilient Communities* (2013) and associated Action Plan. For example:

- The DWP are currently undertaking work with employers and shifting their focus to people aged 50+, as there is evidence that those on Job Seekers Allowance are slower to move off this compared to younger adults.
- There is a 50+ Working Links programme
- Groundworks programme 'Future Steps' is targeted at particular groups including 50+

- Aneurin Leisure provide some basic skills training
- Community connectors, supporting people programmes and Registered Social Landlords are also providing services concerned with providing support for people into work.

Adult Learning

The Essential Skills Team are working with a range of partners, linking Jobcentre Plus, Aneurin Leisure, the Local Authority Education and Regeneration departments plus Communities First, to provide local opportunities at a variety of levels and in a variety of places such as Libraries.



Apprenticeships are also open to anyone aged 16+.

In addition, there is a range of learning activities across Blaenau Gwent that are not necessarily connected to employment (for example, Welsh language courses). Some of the feedback from local engagement suggested older people wanted to see more learning activities of an informal nature (such as crafts) at more accessible times and places. More work needs to be done to see whether there is a real gap here or whether it is an issue of lack of information or other barriers to access, such as transport.

5.2 What wider assets could assist in tackling this issue?

Volunteering

A mapping exercise undertaken in Blaenau Gwent in 2012 showed that older people are involved in a very wide range of roles, from supporting lunch clubs to legal work, from reading in schools to supporting people in prisons.

- The average volunteers aged 50+ was 42%; for half of these over two thirds were 50+, and four agencies said the proportion was over 90%.
- Welcome Friends (formerly the Retired & Senior Volunteer Programme) said 95% of their volunteers are older people. This project placed almost half of all older volunteers amongst the agencies who were mapped, underlining the value of targeted volunteer programmes.
- One of the key barriers to volunteering identified is travel – either because some voluntary organisations cannot afford to pay for travelling expenses, and/or public transport systems do not enable people to travel from their home to their placement.

6. What this tells us about Well-being in Blaenau Gwent

The Wellbeing Assessment has highlighted a range of issues pertinent to older people, who form a very significant and growing part of the population. Work is underway to improve ongoing engagement with older people so that they can have a stronger voice in the community. Work is also underway to look at how information can be communicated more effectively to older people, in particular those who are alone and those who are not digitally connected.

It is important that the key themes of Ageing Well in Wales continue to be progressed through the Wellbeing programme:

- Value older people for their contribution to society
- Continue the roll out of Dementia Friendly Communities and implement the Dementia Strategy
- Spotlight the needs of people aged 50+ in employment and adult learning
- Recognise and support the invaluable contribution of older people as carers and in volunteering
- Profile falls prevention wherever possible
- Make the prevention of loneliness and isolation a priority
- Promote inter-generational work
- Ensure that all aspects of Wellbeing development take into account the needs of older people, to develop an Age Friendly Blaenau Gwent
- Undertake targeted work for the Wellbeing Plan, to ensure necessary data is available in line with the wellbeing indicators for older people outlined by the Older People's Commissioner.

Section 5.6: Educational Outcomes for Children and Young People

1. Overview

The Council and partners are committed to securing high quality education for all children and young people. Progress to raise educational standards has been made, however, as in many Local Authorities there is still much more to be done to further improve pupil outcomes and wellbeing. The scope of this wellbeing assessment document primarily focusses on children and young people aged between 3-16, however, the Public Service Board will also need to consider post 16 outcomes at some point. There has been extensive consultation with partners on the development of a vision for statutory age education, which manifests itself in the following vision statement.

‘The vision is to improve pupil attainment, achievement and wellbeing through a partnership, school-led, self-improving, school to school system approach’.

2. What is the data saying?

2.1 At a Blaenau Gwent level

Education is rich in performance data, however, it is widely acknowledged that educational results at Key Stage 4 are of strategic importance due to the external nature of the examination results. A high-level summary of Blaenau Gwent level Key Stage 4 performance is detailed in Figure ECYP01.

Figure ECYP01– Education Performance by Area

	Level 2 Threshold inc E/W & Maths (%)				CSI (%)				Level 2 (%)				Level 1 (%)				Capped Points Score			
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2013	2014	2015	2016	2013	2014	2015	2016	2013	2014	2015	2016	2013	2014	2015	2016
Abertillery	26.4	23.1	34.4	41.2	21.9	19.9	27.3	31.6	43.8	62.8	56.3	52.2	88.2	85.9	85.2	92.6	285.7	302.6	290.7	307.3
Tredegar	38.6	41.6	52.4	53.7	37.1	40.9	51.7	53.0	71.4	85.1	91.0	94.8	92.9	97.4	97.9	100	316.7	340.1	348.8	354.6
Ebbw Fawr	43.9	53.0	54.3	42.8	41.8	46.6	41.3	32.3	66.2	72.2	80.9	58.5	92.4	93.6	95.7	90.8	311.6	321.6	328.9	293.9
Brynmawr	50.3	51.1	49.4	65.0	47.7	49.4	44.2	56.2	67.3	86.8	71.4	97.8	93.5	97.7	95.5	99.3	322.1	350.6	323.5	362.2
Blaenau Gwent	38.7	41.8	47.7	48.2	36.1	38.6	40.6	40.6	60.1	73.3	74.3	71.4	89.0	90.0	91.8	93.0	299.7	316.3	317.7	318.1
Wales	52.7	55.4	57.9	60.3	49.2	52.6	54.8	57.6	77.8	82.3	84.1	84.0	93.2	94.0	94.4	95.3	333.1	340.8	343.5	344.6

Key

Green-improvement in performance

Red-decline in performance

Foundation Phase

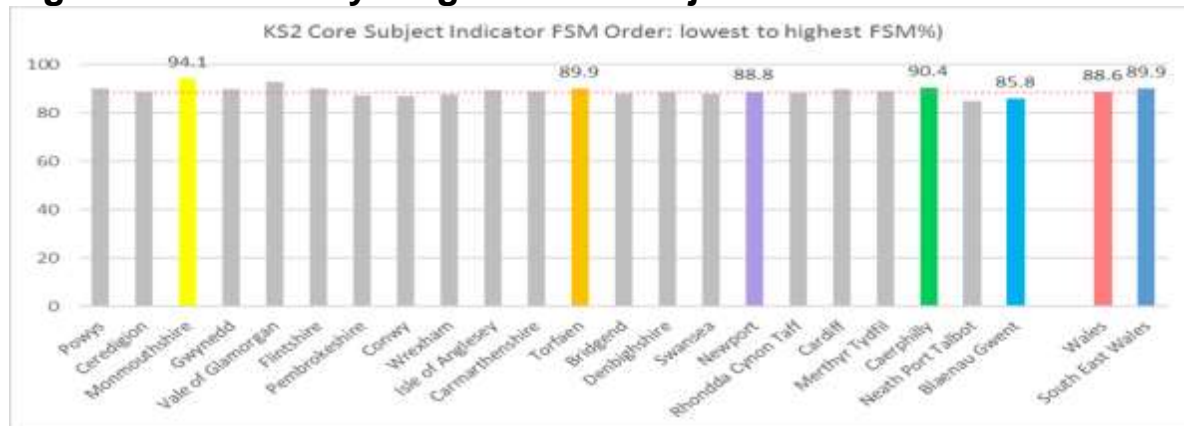
Figure ECYP02: Foundation Phase Indicator



Key Stage 2

Performance decreased slightly to 85.8% in the expected level in 2016, 0.8 percentage points below 86.6% in 2015. Blaenau Gwent is ranked 21st in Wales, which is slightly higher than the LA's FSM ranking and as such performance remains above expectation.

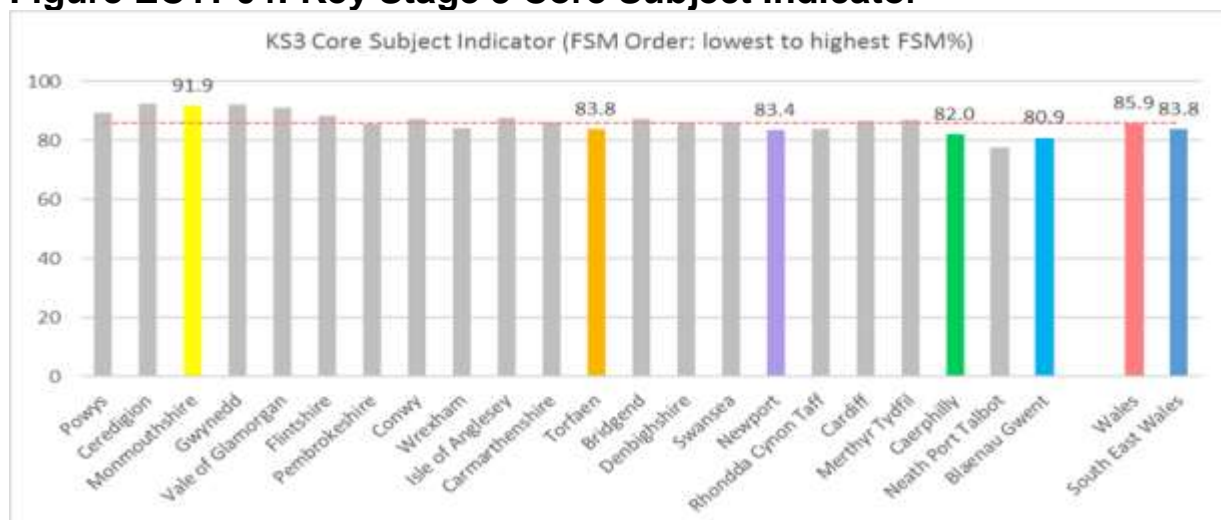
Figure ECYP03: Key Stage 2 Core Subject Indicator



Key Stage 3

Figure ECYP04 shows performance in the core subject indicator (CSI), in 2016 continues to improve slightly, with 80.9% pupils achieving the core subject indicator (CSI), an increase of 0.8 percentage points from 80.1% in 2015. Blaenau Gwent remains ranked 21st in Wales, and is therefore, performing above expectation.

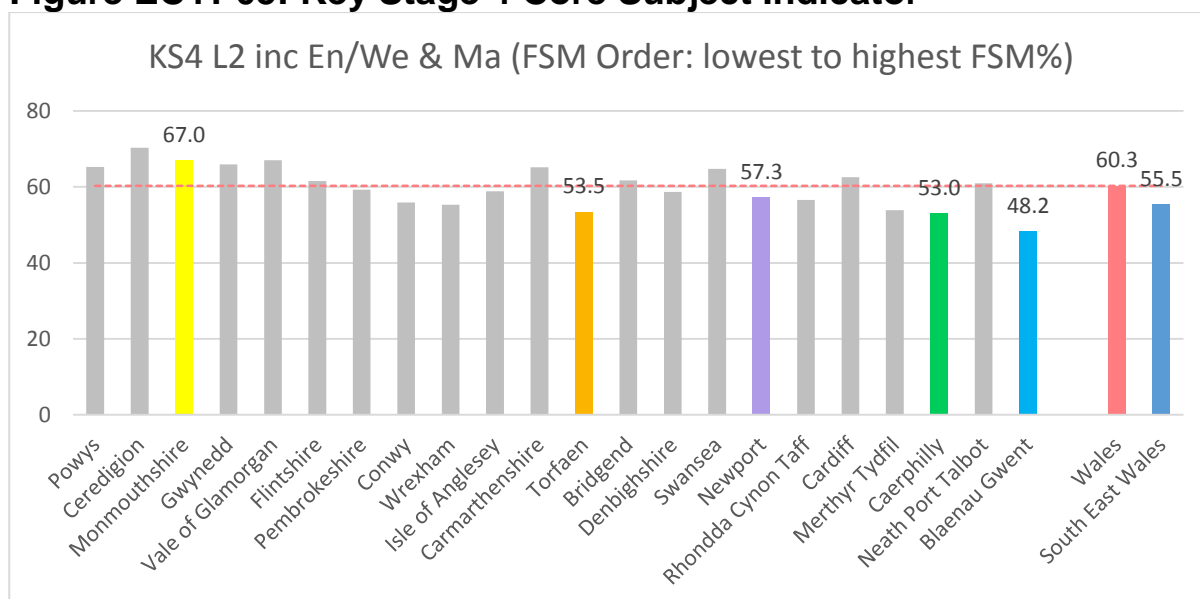
Figure ECYP04: Key Stage 3 Core Subject Indicator



Key Stage 4

Overall Blaenau Gwent provisional figures for 2016 indicate that performance at KS4 improved in the Level 2 inclusive of English and Mathematics, in Level 2 mathematics, in the Level 1 threshold and in the percentage of students without a qualification. However, there was a decline in performance in L2 English, in L2 Science and in the Level 2 Threshold. Blaenau Gwent, although ranked as 22nd in Wales, has significantly reduced the KS4 performance gap during recent years. Furthermore, the LA level aggregated data masks individual school improvements, for example, 3 of the 4 schools improved in 15/16, whilst only 1 declined.

Figure ECYP05: Key Stage 4 Core Subject Indicator



2.2 At a neighbourhood area level

Blaenau Gwent has three formal education cluster areas and Brynmawr has an informal cluster, which broadly mirror the neighbourhood areas identified for the wellbeing assessment. The tables overleaf provide a summary of performance at Key Stages for each secondary school and its cluster of local primary schools in 2015-16. Whilst the tables are not intended to promote comparison between individual schools, it is possible through focusing on performance at a cluster level to consider any patterns of performance which might inform future prioritisation for cluster support and development across a group of schools or to identify where development in one school could possibly be supported by another. The cluster performance includes the work by partner agencies within schools.

Figure ECYP06: Cluster Performance by area

KS2 Performance by Cluster 2014-2016									
Key Stage 2 - Abertillery Cluster									
Cohort Size				2015/16	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16		
School	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	BM Sci	Core Subject Indicator	CSI L4+	CSI L4+	CSI L4+	BM CSI
Abertillery Primary	34	57	49	4	31	91.2%	84.2%	85.7%	3
Bryngwyn Primary	30	28	25	4	28	93.3%	89.3%	84.0%	4
Queen Street Primary	21	13	17	4	14	66.7%	84.6%	76.5%	3
Roseheyworth Primary	14	19	13	3	12	85.7%	89.5%	84.6%	2
St Illtyd's Primary	19	26	21	3	16	84.2%	80.8%	90.5%	2
Sofrydd Primary	19	16	21	1	16	84.2%	87.5%	85.7%	2
Abertillery Cluster	137	159	146		117	85.4%	85.5%	84.9%	
Blaenau Gwent						83.8%	86.6%	85.8%	
Wales						86.1%	87.7%	88.6%	
Key Stage 2 - Brynmawr Cluster									
Cohort Size				2015/16	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16		
School	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	BM Sci	Core Subject Indicator	CSI L4+	CSI L4+	CSI L4+	BM CSI
Blaenycwm Primary	31	21	24	2	25	80.6%	85.7%	87.5%	2
Coed y Garn Primary	29	38	26	2	23	79.3%	71.1%	84.6%	2
St Marys CIW Primary	24	33	30	3	22	91.7%	93.9%	93.3%	2
St Marys RC Primary	20	29	29	2	18	90.0%	86.2%	86.2%	2
Ystruth Primary	27	51	41	3	24	88.9%	88.2%	80.5%	3
Brynmawr Cluster	131	172	150		112	85.5%	84.9%	86.0%	
Blaenau Gwent						83.8%	86.6%	85.8%	
Wales						86.1%	87.7%	88.6%	

Key Stage 2 - Ebbw Vale Cluster									
Cohort Size				2015/16	2013/14		2014/15	2015/16	
School	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	BM Sci	Core Subject Indicator	CSI L4+	CSI L4+	CSI L4+	BM CSI
All Saints RC Primary	21	14	14	1	16	76.2%	100.0%	85.7%	2
Beaufort Hill Primary	27	24	26	2	24	88.9%	87.5%	92.3%	2
Cwm Primary	16	23	23	2	14	87.5%	95.7%	91.3%	2
Ebbw Fawr	41	47	37	3	36	87.8%	87.2%	89.2%	3
Glyncoed Primary	46	42	42	1	39	84.8%	90.5%	95.2%	1
Rhos y Fedwen Primary	12	10	23	3	11	91.7%	80.0%	78.3%	3
Willowtown Primary	54	59	48	3	38	70.4%	89.8%	85.4%	3
Ebbw Vale Cluster	217	219	213		178	82.0%	90.0%	88.7%	
Blaenau Gwent						83.8%	86.6%	85.8%	
Wales						86.1%	87.7%	88.6%	

Key Stage 2 - Tredegar Cluster									
Cohort Size				2015/16	2013/14		2014/15	2015/16	
School	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	BM Sci	Core Subject Indicator	CSI L4+	CSI L4+	CSI L4+	BM CSI
Bryn Bach Primary School	29	32	24	3	29	100.0%	96.9%	91.7%	2
Deighton Junior and Infants	32	29	16	1	27	84.4%	93.1%	93.8%	1
Georgetown Junior And Infants	46	60	51	2	41	89.1%	91.7%	92.2%	2
Glanhowy Primary School	28	32	31	3	17	60.7%	87.5%	80.6%	3
St. Joseph'S R.C. Primary	14	15	13	3	12	85.7%	73.3%	84.6%	2
Tredegar Cluster	149	168	135		126	84.6%	90.5%	88.9%	
Blaenau Gwent						83.8%	86.6%	85.8%	
Wales						86.1%	87.7%	88.6%	

Benchmark Group 1

Benchmark Group 2

Benchmark Group 3

Benchmark Group 4

KS3 Performance 2014-2016												
Cohort Size				2013/14			2014/15			2015/16		
School	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	Core Subject Indicator Level 5+	CSI L5+	BM CSI	Core Subject Indicator	CSI L5+	BM CSI	Core Subject Indicator	CSI L5+	BM CSI
Abertillery Comprehensive	141	113	121	99	70.2%	3	88	77.9%	2	98	81.0%	2
Brynmawr Foundation School	141	147	128	111	78.7%	2	121	82.3%	2	112	87.5%	1
Ebbw Fawr Learning Community	234	203	210	189	80.8%	1	169	83.3%	1	171	81.4%	3
Tredegar Comprehensive	137	138	115	109	79.6%	1	114	82.6%	2	92	80.0%	3
Blaenau Gwent					76.4%			80.1%			80.9%	
Wales					81.0%			83.9%			85.9%	

KS4 Performance 2014-2016												
Cohort Size				2013/14			2014/15			2015/16		
School	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	L2 Inc	L2 Inc	BMI L2 Inc	L2 Inc	L2 Inc	BMI L2 Inc	L2 Inc	L2 Inc	BMI L2 Inc
Abertillery Comprehensive	156	128	136	36	23.1%	4	44	34.4%	3	56	41.2%	3
Brynmawr Foundation School	174	154	137	89	51.1%	2	76	49.4%	3	89	65.0%	1
Ebbw Fawr Learning Community	234	230	229	124	53.0%	1	125	54.3%	2	98	42.8%	4
Tredegar Comprehensive	154	145	134	64	41.6%	4	76	52.4%	2	72	53.7%	2
Blaenau Gwent					41.8%			47.7%			48.2%	
Wales					55.4%			57.9%			60.2%	

The focus on increased school to school work across clusters of schools is already beginning to take place: the EAS, via funding from Welsh Government (February 2017) are seed funding greater cluster working and also requesting school clusters to work together to devise their bespoke cluster support and improvement plans which are to reflect their cluster performance, pupil wellbeing, teaching and leadership needs.

2.3 Interpretation of data

The following analysis provides an interpretation of performance data at Foundation Phase and all Key Stages for each secondary school and its cluster of local primary schools in 2015-16:

Within the Abertillery Cluster at the expected level, with the exception of PSD, performance currently sits below the Blaenau Gwent and Wales Average in all indicators at Foundation Phase and Key Stage 2. At Key Stage 3, performance is below Wales averages in all indicators, but close to the Blaenau Gwent average in all indicators other than Mathematics where it is below. At Key Stage 4, performance is below Blaenau Gwent and Wales averages in all indicators.

At the expected level within the Brynmawr Cluster, Foundation Phase cluster performance is above BG and Wales for LLCE below for MD and PSD and above BG for FPOI but below when compared to Wales. At Key Stage 2, performance is below Wales averages in all indicators, and below Blaenau Gwent average in English. Performance in Mathematics, Science and CSI performance is at the Blaenau Gwent average. At Key Stage 3, performance is above the Blaenau Gwent and Wales average in all indicators. At Key Stage 4, performance is above Blaenau Gwent and Wales averages in all indicators with the exception of the CSI which is below Wales average.

At the expected level in the Ebbw Fawr Cluster, cluster performance is above Wales and Blaenau Gwent averages at Foundation Phase and Key Stage 2 in all indicators. At Key Stage 3, performance is below Wales averages in all indicators and below Blaenau Gwent average in Mathematics. Performance in English, Science and the CSI is above the Blaenau Gwent average. At Key Stage 4, performance is below Blaenau Gwent and Wales averages in all indicators with the exception of English which is slightly above the Blaenau Gwent average.

At the expected level in the Tredegar Cluster, cluster performance is above Wales and Blaenau Gwent averages at Foundation Phase and Key Stage 2 in all indicators. At Key Stage 3, performance is below Blaenau Gwent and Wales Averages in English and in the CSI. It is above Blaenau Gwent and Wales averages in Mathematics, and above Blaenau Gwent but below Wales averages in Science. At Key Stage 4, performance is above Blaenau Gwent averages in all indicators, and above Wales averages in Science, Capped Points Score, Level 2 threshold and Level 1 Threshold. Performance is below Wales average in Level 2 including English/Welsh and Mathematics, CSI, English and Mathematics.

2.4 What are the critical issues for public services to consider?

Improving educational performance is fundamental to the development of a highly-skilled workforce which is essential to Blaenau Gwent's longer term development. The focus on high quality teaching and learning minimises the potential for young people to become NEET (not in employment, education or training) which in turn reduces levels of unemployment and economic dependency. The Council and its partners need to continue to work closely together to identify weaknesses in educational performance to improve standards. Some of the critical elements of partnership work include;

- Making sure partners support work so that all our children achieve well, enjoy going to school and feel safe, particularly our most vulnerable children;
- Improving standards for all our learners, whatever challenges they face;
- Supporting our schools well, so that all our schools feel supported enough to help all our children achieve all they are capable of;
- Improving school attendance;
- Reducing pupil exclusions;
- Improving school categorisation; and
- Improving standards in school inspections.

3. What research exists to help us develop a response to this/ these issues?

Regionally, nationally and internationally, there is much evidence that highlights the benefits to be gained when schools work increasingly with other schools and partners (i.e. the work of Professor Hargreaves, Professor Mel Ainscow, the London and Manchester Challenge).

Welsh Government launched their school-led, self- improving agenda at a summit event in March 2017, emphasising the increased focus on the need for schools to accept greater autonomy and to work closer with other schools in order to bring about on-going, resilient and sustainable improvement.

Research and practice across the South East Wales (SEWC) region demonstrates that effective self-improving, school to school work, works best where it is truly collaborative and based on mutually shared interests and values (Dr Kevin Palmer, EAS Self-improving strategy and current school to school networks).

4. Five ways of working

4.1 Collaboration

<i>Adds no value</i>	<i>Adds some value</i>	<i>Adds moderate value</i>	<i>Critical to tackle the issue</i>
			x

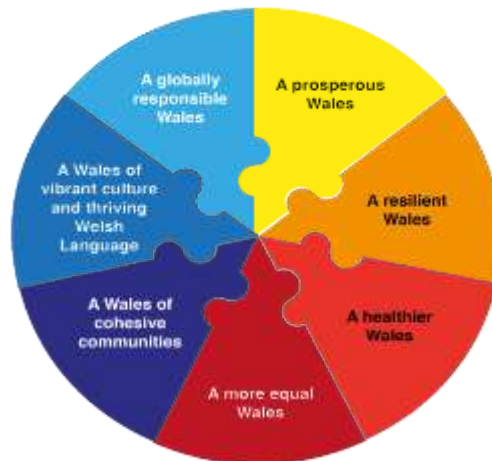
Blaenau Gwent's schools have untapped potential to improve themselves as demonstrated in this year's much improved school categorisation profile (increased number of green and yellow schools with less amber and red schools) and there is significant potential to transform the current approach to one that is determined by schools for schools. Partners were engaged in the vision consultation process and it was amended to reflect the importance of partnership working with schools. Partners continue to have a collaborative key role to play in improving educational outcomes, for example the Raising Aspirations Group (RAG) and the NEET Reduction Strategy.

4.2 a) Integration – links with themes

<i>Economic</i>	<i>Social</i>	<i>Environmental</i>	<i>Cultural</i>
x	x	x	x

Education and the raising standards agenda have clear and explicit links to economic, social, environmental and cultural regeneration of Blaenau Gwent.

4.2b) Integration –Contribution to the National Goal



Supporting Commentary

Prosperous – Education is critical to developing a skilled and well-educated population in an economy which generates wealth and provides employment opportunities, allowing people to take advantage of the wealth generated through securing decent work.

Resilient- Education's national curriculum promotes a nation which maintains and enhances a diverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change (for example climate change).

Healthier- Education's national curriculum promotes a society in which people's physical and mental well-being is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood.

Equal- In Education, all pupils/students are supported to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances (including their socio economic background and circumstances).

Cohesive- The Blaenau Gwent 21st Century Schools Programme facilitates the provision of the right schools in the right places, and therefore, contributes to attractive, viable, safe and well-connected communities.

Culture & Language- Education's national curriculum promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language, and also encourages people to participate in the arts, and sports and recreation.

Globally Responsible- Education is crucial to promoting a globally responsible Wales. A nation which, when doing anything to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, takes account of whether doing such a thing may make a positive contribution to global well-being and the capacity to adapt to change (for example climate change).

4.3 Thinking to the Long Term

Short term (1-2)	Over the next 1 to 2 years the focus has to be on embedding the vision for Education, to improve learner outcomes across the four Key Stages, but particularly at KS4.
Medium term (2-5 years)	Review the impact of the education vision on learner outcomes and set the future strategic direction for the medium/long term.
Long term (10 years plus)	Blaenau Gwent's educational outcomes continue to improve, so that children and young people have the skills to secure good employment and can contribute actively to the economic regeneration of the County Borough.

4.4 Prevention

Raising educational standards is essential to Blaenau Gwent's longer term economic development. Section 2.4 highlights some of the critical elements of partnership work such as improving learner standards, wellbeing, school attendance, reducing exclusions etc. The very nature of this work is preventative and can be seen as an investment into improving the life chances of our children and young people.

4.5 Involvement

During the 'Blaenau Gwent We Want' Public Engagement Programme our general theme 'Education and Skills' was the 8th most popular comment overall with 197 comments (5%). When we asked what was special about Blaenau Gwent the theme was the 3rd most popular (behind Environment, and Community) with 48 comments (8%).

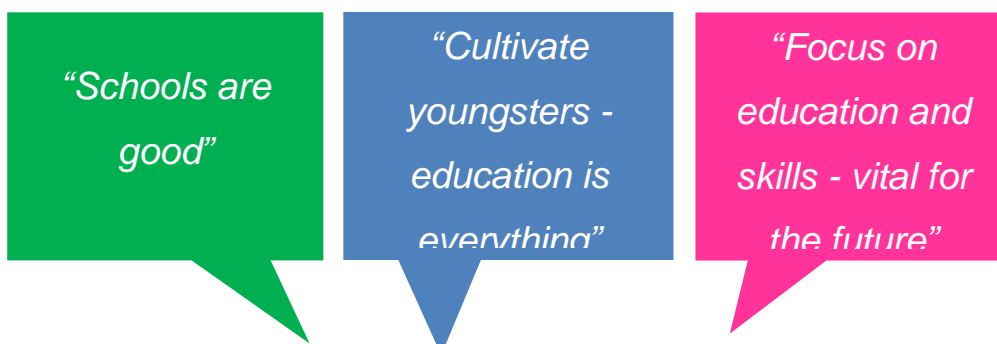
As a general topic 'education & skills' was 9th highest overall with 129 comments (3%). There was also a more specific 'schools' topic which was 25th highest overall with 51 comments (1%). However, when we asked what is special about Blaenau Gwent 'schools' was 4th highest overall (32 comments, 5%) showing that people thought our schools were an asset to the area; education and skills, in contrast, was 17th highest (8 comments, 1%).

When we asked what is important to people to live well and enjoy their lives Education & Skills was the 4th most popular topic with 34 comments (8%)

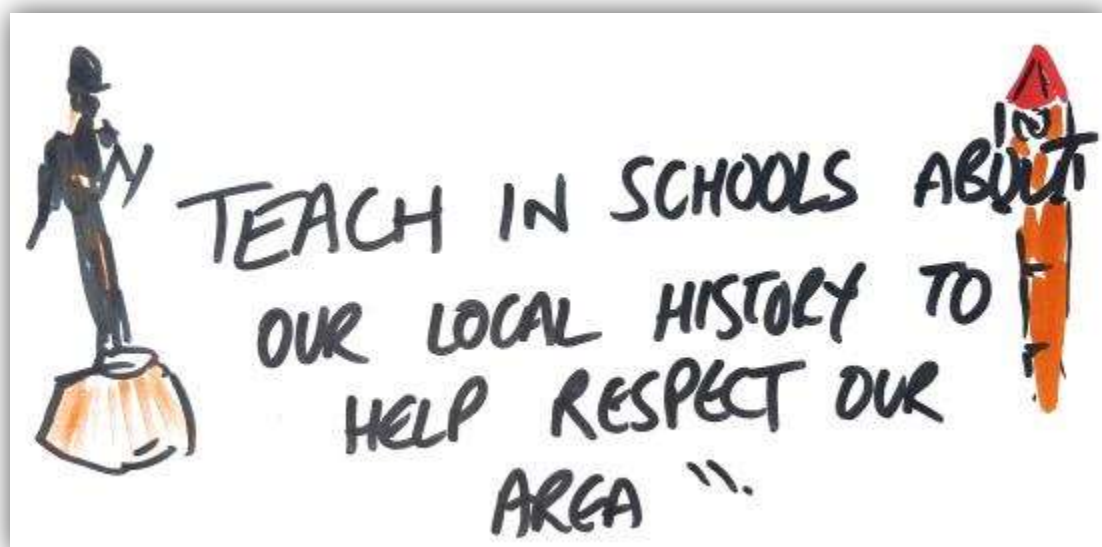
Most comments were about the vital importance of education and skills for children and young people. There was a general feeling that schools within the area were of a high standard.

Those in the Upper Ebbw Fach Valley (33, 5%) were more likely to mention Education & Skills. It was least likely to be mentioned in the Sirhowy Valley (10, 2%); Ebbw Fawr (27, 3%), Lower Ebbw Fach (13, 3%). People from across all valleys were equally likely to say that our schools are special.

Some popular comments:



Selection of relevant images from 'Blaenau Gwent We Want' process



5. What is currently being done to tackle this issue?

5.1 Is this issue currently being tackled in partnership?

The Single Integrated Plan (SIP) has a Learning Theme and a sub-group, which reports to the Public Service Board. The Council's Corporate Improvement Plan (CIP) identifies raising educational standards as one of its two key priorities. The CIP identifies the following key actions that are partnership driven:

- Strengthen partnership working between Flying Start, Families First, Integrated Family Support Team and Social Services;
- Young people are supported to remain in or enter education, employment or training;
- All teams to contribute to improving outcomes for looked after children and care leavers;
- Develop a stronger peer support and school to school learning network across the EAS; and
- Ensure that schools have sufficient focus on a whole school approach to attendance including effective use of data and systems region sharing good practice from both within BG and the wider areas

5.2 What wider assets could assist in tackling this issue?

Improving educational performance is primarily the responsibility of the Local Authority, EAS and the Schools. However, these organisations require the support of partner agencies to contribute to raising educational standards. The work of the Learning Theme sub-group currently co-ordinates the partnership approach, including the 3rd and voluntary sectors. In the future, the Public Services Board are tasked with setting the strategic direction for the partnership agenda across the County Borough.

6. What this tells us about Well-being in Blaenau Gwent

There has been significant improvement during recent years in improving educational outcomes across the board, however, there are challenges that remain, including;

- A need to further improve ambition and aspiration at an individual, school and Local Authority level;
- Continuing to improve pupil attainment levels and skills, which in combination remain low;
- Pupil wellbeing is disproportionately challenged;
- The socio-economic status of Blaenau Gwent and the impact upon learners; and,
- Challenging financial (revenue/capital) position for the Council, EAS, Schools and partners.

The education regulators in Wales, Estyn are currently engaging with key stakeholders on establishing a new inspection framework. The improving standards and wellbeing agendas are inextricably linked. Wellbeing will be a key component within the new inspection framework, consequently, Blaenau Gwent's partners will have to respond in a collaborative manner to meet the regulatory demands of the new framework, and importantly, serve the County Borough's learners with an education provision that is fit for the 21st Century.

Section 5.7: Community Safety

1. Overview

Information to inform this section of the well-being assessment has been drawn from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent Strategic Assessment published in December 2016. This strategic assessment covers data for the last financial year period of 1st April 2015 to 31st March 2016 compared to the previous year.

NB. Please note that the datasets for the Crime, ASB and Domestic Abuse sections have been updated to show the more recent calendar year periods of 2016 vs 2015.

Other key data sources have included the common data set agreed with the Local Government Data Unit at a Gwent level. This section of the wellbeing assessment seeks to explore available data and how this might be affecting the safety and perception of safety of people in Blaenau Gwent.

2. What is the data saying?

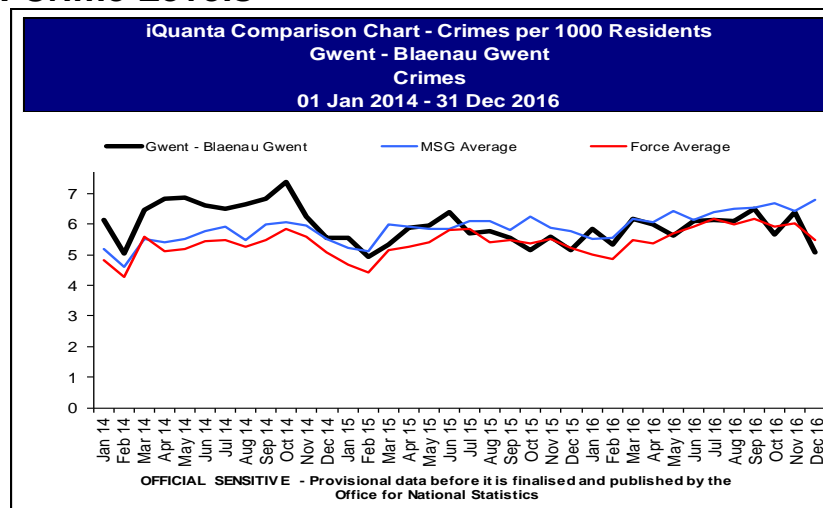
2.1 At a Blaenau Gwent level

2.1a Crime

Total Crime in Blaenau Gwent has increased by 6% over the calendar year period of 2016. The 4,895 offences account for 12.5% of all crime in Gwent and translate to a crime rate of 70.96 crimes per 1000 population which remains above Gwent's average (68.33).

As a result of the 2016 increase, the benchmarking chart below now shows a slightly decreasing trend for the monthly crime rate over the last three years i.e. is in line with its MSG average (blue line) and is above the Force average.

Figure CS01: Crime Levels

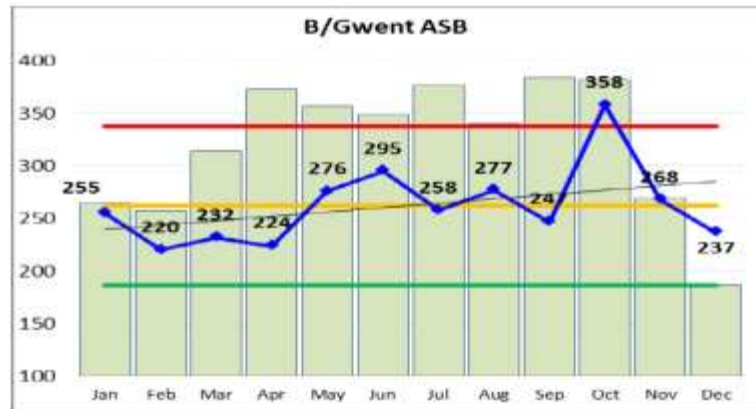


2.1b Anti-Social Behaviour

Blaenau-Gwent saw a significant reduction in ASB incidents during 2016 i.e. - 15% or 546 fewer incidents. The 3,181 incidents account for 14% of all ASB incidents in Gwent and translate to a rate of 45.58 per 1000 population which remains above Gwent's average (38.65).

The chart below shows the slightly increasing trend of ASB incidents across Blaenau Gwent over 2016. The only peak was recorded in October linked to the school half-term and Halloween.

Figure CS02: Recorded Anti-Social Behaviour



2.2 At a neighbourhood level

2.2a Crime

The table below shows a breakdown of crime by the areas within Blaenau Gwent.

Figure CS03: Crime Levels by Area

Area	Jan-15 to Dec-15	Jan-16 to Dec-16	Daily Avg (Prev)	Daily Avg (Latest)	Rate per 1,000	Year End Diff	% Chg from Last Year	Pop Est	Proportion
BIGWENT	4613	4895	12.6	13.4	70.140	282	6.1%	69,789	
Abertillery	952	1037	2.6	2.8	63.596	85	8.9%	16,306	21.2%
Brynmawr	1004	1174	2.8	3.2	79.009	170	16.9%	14,859	24.0%
Ebbw Vale	1553	1677	4.3	4.6	71.746	124	8.0%	23,374	34.3%
Tredegarr	1104	1007	3.0	2.8	66.033	-97	-8.8%	15,250	20.6%

With exception to Tredegarr who experienced a 9% reduction, all other areas saw increases, in particular Brynmawr saw a 17% increase. In terms of Crimes per 1000 population, Brynmawr (79) and Ebbw Vale (72) are now the highest areas and impact upon Blaenau Gwent's overall rate of 71.

At ward level, the areas that had most impact upon Brynmawr's significant increase were Blaina (+28%) and Nantyglo (+19%). In both areas, there were

significant increases in Criminal Damage & Arson, Violence and Acquisitive crime offences.

The below table shows total crime in Blaenau Gwent split by crime type.

Priority crimes in terms of volume remain as Criminal Damage & Arson and Violent offences.

Figure CS04: Crime by Offence Group

Area	Jan-15 to Dec-15	Jan-16 to Dec-16	Rate per 1,000	Year End Diff	% Chg from Last Year	Pop Est	Proportion
Criminal Damage & Arson	1058	1097	15.719	39	3.7%	69,789	22.4%
Violence Without Injury	628	845	12.108	217	34.6%	69,789	17.3%
Violence With Injury	524	550	7.881	26	5.0%	69,789	11.2%
All Other Theft	525	517	7.408	-8	-1.5%	69,789	10.6%
Vehicle Crime	454	464	6.649	10	2.2%	69,789	9.5%
Burglary - Non Dwelling	316	342	4.900	26	8.2%	69,789	7.0%
Shoplifting	287	270	3.869	-17	-5.9%	69,789	5.5%
Public Order Offences	206	230	3.296	24	11.7%	69,789	4.7%
Burglary - Dwelling	193	196	6.444	3	1.6%	30,416	4.0%
Drug Offences	168	100	1.433	-68	-40.5%	69,789	2.0%
Misc Crimes Against Society	95	100	1.433	5	5.3%	69,789	2.0%
Other Sexual Offences	68	81	1.161	13	19.1%	69,789	1.7%
Rape	35	24	0.344	-11	-31.4%	69,789	0.5%
Possession Of Weapons	12	24	0.344	12	100.0%	69,789	0.5%
Bicycle Theft	17	20	0.287	3	17.6%	69,789	0.4%
Theft From The Person	17	14	0.201	-3	-17.6%	69,789	0.3%
Robbery	10	11	0.158	1	10.0%	69,789	0.2%
Homicide	0	0	0.000	0	0.0%	69,789	0.0%

Crimes that have seen a notable increase over the year are Violence without Injury (+217 crimes, +35%) and Other Sexual offences (+13 crimes, +19%). Other notable increases, albeit small numbers were in Possession of Weapons having doubled (from 12 to 24), and Bicycle Theft (from 17 to 20).

2.2b Anti-Social Behaviour

The table below shows a breakdown of ASB incidents by the areas within Blaenau Gwent.

Figure CS05: Recorded Anti-Social Behaviour by area

Area	Jan-15 to Dec-15	Jan-16 to Dec-16	Rate per 1,000	Year End Diff	% Chg from Last Year	Pop Est	Proportion
B/GWENT	3727	3181	45.580	-546	-14.6%	69,789	
Ebbw Vale	1139	1091	46.676	-48	-4.2%	23,374	34.3%
Brynawr	894	808	54.378	-86	-9.6%	14,859	25.4%
Tredegarr	907	779	51.082	-128	-14.1%	15,250	24.5%
Abertillery	787	503	30.848	-284	-36.1%	16,306	15.8%

In terms of volume of ASB incidents, priority sections remain in Ebbw Vale (1,091 incidents, 34.3% of BG total) and Brynmawr (808 incidents) accounting for two-thirds of Blaenau Gwent's total ASB. All areas saw reductions, more notably in Abertillery with -36%. In terms of ASB per 1000 population Brynmawr (54) and Tredegar (51) are skewing B-Gwent's average rate of 46.

At ward level, the only areas that had increases were Cwm (+65%; from 107 to 177), Blaina (+1.7%) and Beaufort (+0.9%).

The most common classification of ASB during the period has been nuisance ASB accounting for 63% of all incidents. Nuisance offences have increased slightly by 2% over the period. Personal incidents have accounted for 28% of all incidents and have decreased from 31%% over the year. Environmental incidents account for just 9% of all incidents and have increased from 7% over the period.

Local Authority data

The below data was received from Blaenau-Gwent Local Authority relating to different types of anti-social behaviour.

Figure CS06: Local Authority Anti-Social Behaviour by area

Complaint category	2014/2015	2015/2016	Diff	%Change
Illicit Tipping	557	621	64	11.5%
Straying dogs	378	308	-70	-18.5%
Noise domestic	300	256	-44	-14.7%
Abandoned Vehicle	81	222	141	174.1%
Dog fouling Enforcement	162	131	-31	-19.1%
Noise dog	135	112	-23	-17.0%
Litter	33	31	-2	-6.1%
Noise Vehicles	23	17	-6	-26.1%
Uncontrolled animals (Straying animals)	2	7	5	250.0%
Noise other animals	13	4	-9	-69.2%
Noise Car alarm	0	2	2	200.0%
Noise road works (Construction/Demolition Sites)	6	1	-5	-83.3%
Noise Industrial	10	1	-9	-90.0%
Total ASB	1700	1713	13	0.8%

ASB related complaints saw very little change compared to 2014/15 (+0.8%). However, notable increases in abandoned vehicles (+174%) and illicit tipping (+12%). These were counteracted by significant reductions in stray dogs (-19%) and noise domestic (-15%) complaints. During this period no

community triggers were activated for ASB. This process provides an opportunity for victims of persistent ASB to request a multi-agency meeting to review the actions of agencies.

2.2c Domestic abuse

The below table shows a breakdown of domestic abuse related crime across Gwent comparing 2016 with 2015.

Figure CS07: Domestic Abuse

Area	Jan-15 to Dec-15	Jan-16 to Dec-16	Rate per 1,000	Diff	% Chg from Last Year	Pop Est	Proportion
B/GWENT	588	694	9.944	106	18.0%	69,789	13.7%
CAERPHILLY	1445	1464	8.168	19	1.3%	179,247	29.0%
TORFAEN	832	851	9.310	19	2.3%	91,407	16.8%
MONMOUTHSHIRE	417	417	4.528	0	0.0%	92,100	8.3%
NEWPORT	1328	1628	11.108	300	22.6%	146,558	32.2%
Force Total Crimes	4646	5054	8.727	408	8.8%	579,101	

Over the 12 months BG has seen a 18% increase of recorded domestic abuse crime and the 694 related offences account for 14% of Gwent's overall total. Its crime rate of 9.9 per 1000 head of population remains above the Gwent average (8.7). In addition to the above information Gwent Police have been able to provide the following information at a neighbourhood area level.

Figure CS08:

Area	Jan-15 to Dec-15	Jan-16 to Dec-16	Rate per 1,000	Year End Diff	% Chg from Last Year	Pop Est	Proportion
B/GWENT	588	694	9.944	106	18.0%	69,789	23.1%
Abertillery	121	159	9.751	38	31.4%	16,306	5.3%
Brynmawr	145	185	12.450	40	27.6%	14,859	6.1%
Ebbw Vale	200	210	8.984	10	5.0%	23,374	7.0%
Tredeggar	122	140	9.180	18	14.8%	15,250	4.7%

All areas of Blaenau-Gwent experienced increases in 2016, where Abertillery demonstrated the highest increase of 31% (+38 offences). At ward level, Rassau (+75%), Llanhilleth (+66%) and Six Bells (+60%) had a significant impact upon these increases.

2.2d Sexual offences

The following information was drawn from the Gwent Police Strategic Assessment 2015/16 and showed a 15% increase in sexual offences for the Blaenau Gwent area. Please note caution needs to be taken when looking at the above sexual offences figures. Gwent Police report that almost a quarter of all offences are historical and may have occurred as far back as 1969.

Figure CS09:

Sexual Offences	2014/15	2015/16	Diff	%Change	Current Crime Rate	% Proportion
Newport	186	242	56	30.1%	1.65	27.3%
Monmouthshire	121	143	22	18.2%	1.53	16.2%
Blaenau Gwent	86	99	13	15.1%	1.42	11.2%
Caerphilly	231	256	25	10.8%	1.43	28.9%
Torfaen	150	145	-5	-3.3%	1.59	16.4%
Total	774	885	111	14.3%	1.52	

This information is only available at a Gwent level at this moment in time. It is hoped however that neighbourhood area level information will be available within the 2017 Gwent Police Strategic Assessment that will be published in the autumn.

2.2e Cybercrime

Data on cyber-crime is only available at this moment in time at a Gwent level. It is hoped however that neighbourhood area level information will be available within the 2017 Gwent Police Strategic Assessment that will be published in the autumn.

A non-exhaustive list of 84 key words were searched in all crime offences for the period Jan – Dec 2015, the offences identified were then reviewed to establish if they were Cyber Crimes. The following analysis is based on the offences identified as Cyber Crime from the Key Word Searches.

As shown in the table below, the number of offences, identified as Cyber Crime, has increased over the last 6 months compared to the previous 6 months.

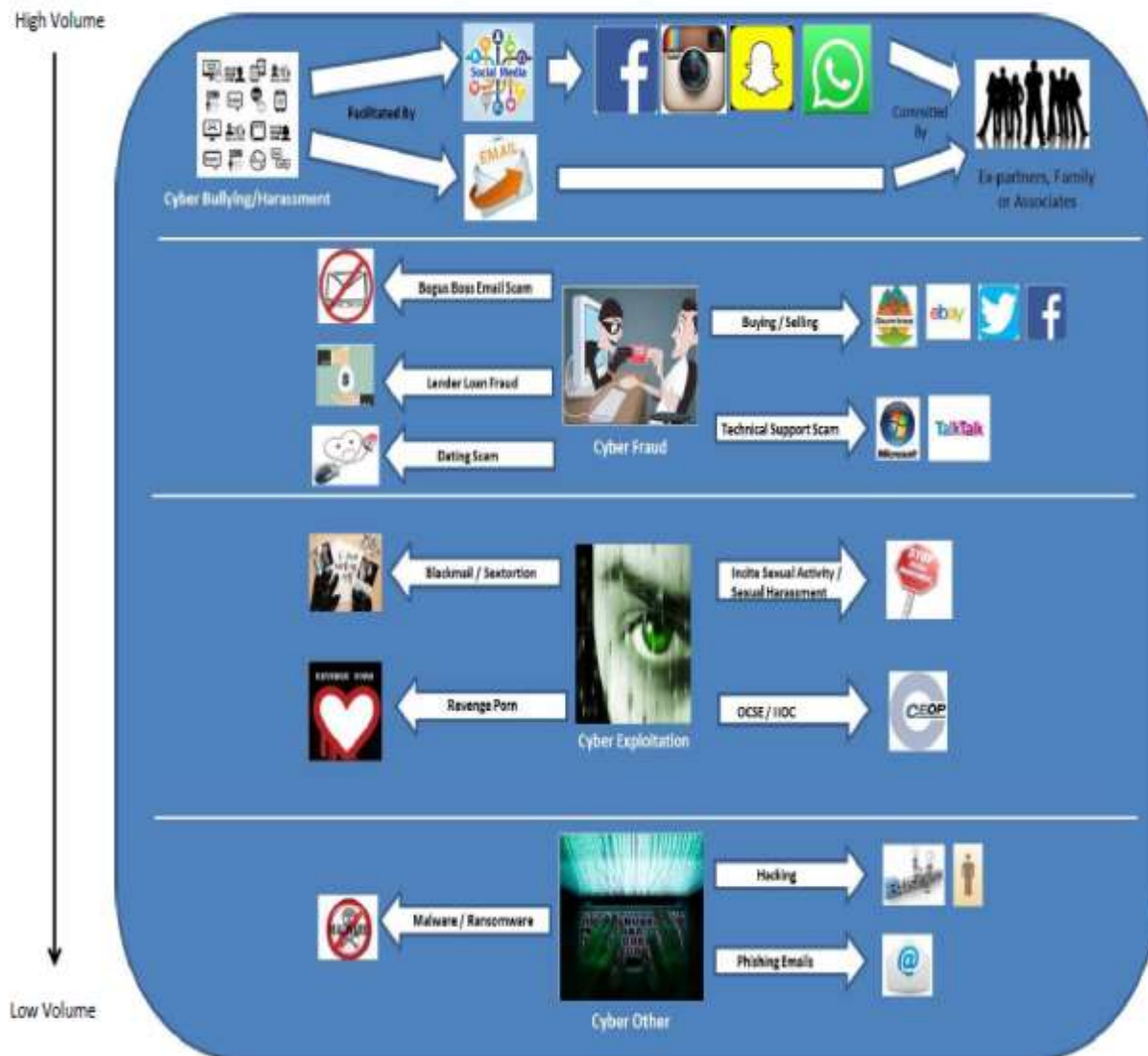
Figure CS10:

	Jan - Jun 2015	July - Dec 2015	Difference over last 6 months	% Difference over last 6 months
Cyber Crime	253	402	149	59%

The infographic below shows the current picture of Cyber Crime in Gwent and combines the trends found in both crime and action fraud data. In terms of volume Cyber Bullying/Harassment is the most prominent trend and so features at the top of the picture. This is followed by Cyber Fraud, Cyber Exploitation and then Cyber Other.

Figure CS11:

6.1. Infographic of the Cyber Crime Picture in Gwent



In terms of crime data, Cyber Bullying/Harassment, (where threats, abuse and harassment is carried out via social media and email), is the greatest problem within Gwent. This is followed by Cyber Exploitation which follows several themes such as Inciting Sexual Activity, Sexual Harassment, Revenge Porn, Sextortion/Blackmail and Indecent Images of Children. Cyber Exploitation involves younger victims who may be more vulnerable and at a greater risk. CEOP data shows a sharp increase in the number of packages received, increasing from 52 in 2014 to 95 in 2015 illustrating the risk within this area of criminality.

In terms of Action Fraud data, the greatest problem in terms of the number of victims and incidents is Online Shopping and Auction Fraud. This is followed by Technical Support Scams, Bogus Boss Email Scams and Lender Loan Fraud. Dating Scams also feature within the data together with Malware/Ransomware, Phishing Emails and Hacking.

2.2f Fire Data

Data has been obtained via South Wales Fire and Rescue Service (SWFRS) for the two financial years 2014/15 and 2015/16 for the area of Gwent. The table below details incidents reported to SWFRS over the last two years split by Local Authority area.

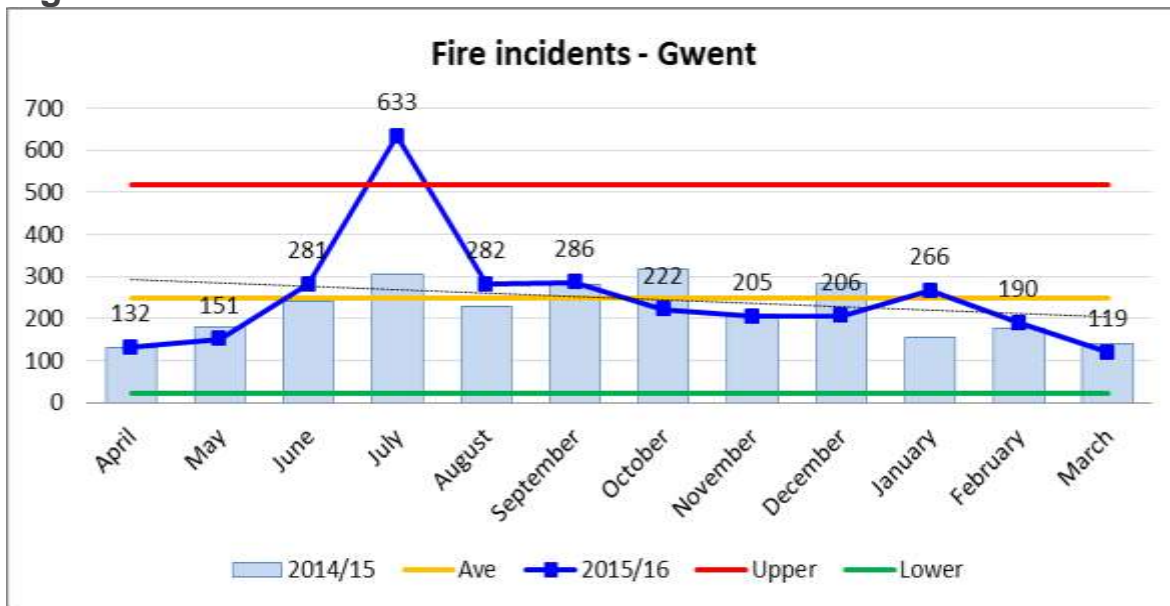
Figure CS12:

UNITARY AUTHORITY	INCIDENT CATEGORY	2014/2015	2015/2016	Change	% Change
Blaenau Gwent	Malicious False Alarm	29	28		
	Fire	586	564		
Blaenau Gwent Total		615	592	-23	-3.74%
Caerphilly	Malicious False Alarm	52	38		
	Fire	750	908		
Caerphilly Total		802	946	144	17.96%
Monmouthshire	Malicious False Alarm	2	10		
	Fire	214	209		
Monmouthshire Total		216	219	3	1.39%
Newport	Malicious False Alarm	61	50		
	Fire	741	854		
Newport Total		802	904	102	12.72%
Torfaen	Malicious False Alarm	21	38		
	Fire	362	438		
Torfaen Total		383	476	93	24.28%
Grand Total	Malicious False Alarm	165	164	-1	-0.61%
	Fire	2653	2973	320	12.06%
		2818	3137	319	11.32%

Blaenau Gwent has seen the only decrease in incidents over the year (-3.7%). The data shows an 11.3% increase across Gwent in incidents over 2015/16 compared to 2014/15.

The chart below shows the decreasing trend in fire incidents over the last two financial years.

Figure CS13:

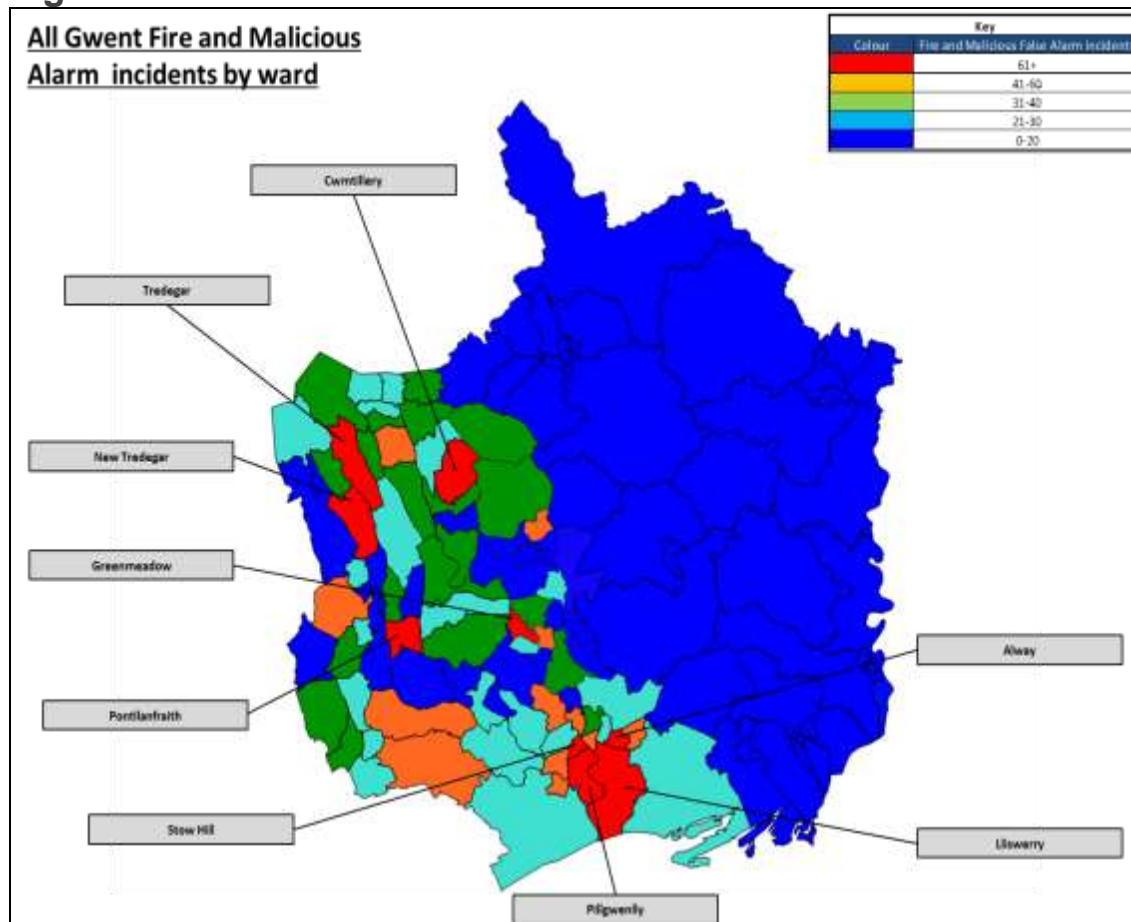


On average, there are 248 incidents per month, where incidents tend to rise in the summer months peaking in July before decreasing into Autumn/winter months. The weather is a major contributor to fire incidents, with hot weather in the summer leading to increased opportunity for grass/woodland fires.

Damage/Arson offences and Fire incidents all have correlation in terms of time periods/location etc. Incidents across Gwent peak between the hours of 5-10pm in the evening, with specific hourly spike between 8-9pm on weekends, followed by a Wednesday.

The below Choropleth map shows the priority wards in terms of fire incidents across Gwent.

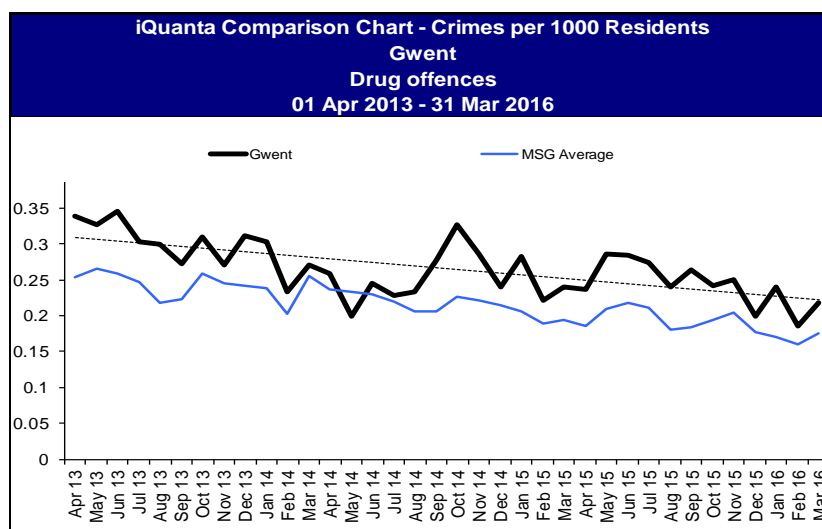
Figure CS14:



Priority wards for fire incidents for Blaenau Gwent are Tredegar Central & West, Cwmtillery, Sirhowy, Georgetown and Nantyglo.

2.2g Substance Misuse

Figure CS15:



Recorded drug offence volume has remained relatively static, decreasing marginally year on year by 4.2% (down from 1,767 to 1,693). There has also been a decrease in offences of Trafficking in Controlled Drugs over the last three years, with 426 offences recorded in the current period (down from 483 in the previous period).

Recorded trafficking offences has decreased by 11.8% (-57) across Gwent. When viewing the recorded offence, the link between proactive policing and drugs offences being predominantly self-generating should be noted. Overall, the number of recorded stop checks continued to fall, decreasing by 52.4% (down from 2,598 to 1,236) in the 12 months to February 2016, with drug related stops falling by 52.8% (down from 3,010 to 1,422) in the same period. This change in approach, it is suggested, has had an impact upon recorded drug offence volume.

The latest results from the Crime Survey for England and Wales show that the share of adults aged 16-59 years who have taken an illicit drug during 2015/16 has remained relatively static at 8.4%, compared to 8.6% in 2014/15. Drug use in young adults (16-24 years) also remains static, from 19.5% in 2014/15 to 18.0% in 2015/16. This segment of the adult population continues to be the most common age range for the wider adult age group, equating to more than double the 16-59 years age range). In relation to specific drug use during 2015/16, the survey identified that LSD, mephedrone and anabolic steroid use among young adults aged between 16-24 years saw significant reductions. The results for the Crime Survey for England and Wales have been published at a national level, the findings generally mirror the number of drug offences recorded in Gwent, with levels having remained consistent during the last two years.

Drug crime per 1000 population has decreased slightly from 3.04 to 2.92 during the period which is above the MSG average of 2.27. The below graph shows the decreasing trend in Drug Offences per 1000 population over the last three year period across Gwent with the Blaenau Gwent area showing a 10% reduction.

Figure CS16:

Area	Apr-14 to Mar-15	Apr-15 to Mar-16	Daily Avg (Prev)	Daily Avg (Latest)	Rate per 1,000	Year End Diff	% Chg from Last Year	Pop Est	Proportion
WEST LPA	828	854	2.3	2.3	2.508	26	3.1%	340,443	50.4%
B/GWENT	169	152	0.5	0.4	2.178	-17	-10.1%	69,789	9.0%
CAERPHILLY	444	457	1.2	1.2	2.550	13	2.9%	179,247	27.0%
TORFAEN	215	245	0.6	0.7	2.680	30	14.0%	91,407	14.5%
EAST LPA	939	838	2.6	2.3	3.511	-101	-10.8%	238,658	49.5%
MONMOUTHSHIRE	236	162	0.6	0.4	1.759	-74	-31.4%	92,100	9.6%
NEWPORT	703	676	1.9	1.8	4.613	-27	-3.8%	146,558	39.9%
Force Total Crimes	1767	1693	4.8	4.6	2.923	-74	-4.2%	579,101	

Cannabis Factories

In the period to 31st August 2015, there were 216 recorded instances of cannabis cultivation in Gwent, compared to 150 during the previous period.

New Psychoactive substances (NPS)

“NPS or so called ‘legal highs’ are substances which produce the same, or similar effects, to illegal stimulant drugs such as cocaine and ecstasy, but are not controlled under legislation [the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 in the UK]. They are however, considered illegal under current medicines legislation to sell, supply or advertise for “human consumption”. To get round this sellers refer to them as research chemicals, plant food, bath crystals or pond cleaner”. They are usually sold on the high street in ‘head shops’ and increasingly online.

According to the National Crime Agency the National Strategic Assessment of Serious and Organised Crime 2014, due to the dynamic nature of the chemistry involved in producing NPSs’, this area will continue to grow, with

the threat posed by China highlighted for its continuing production and supply.

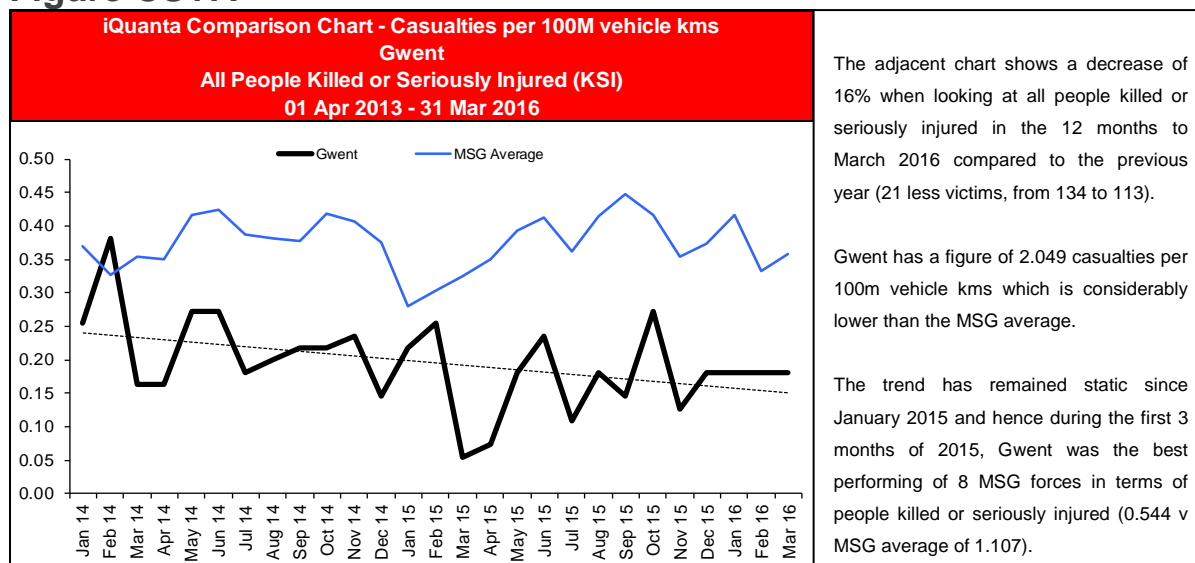
The latest results from the Crime Survey for England and Wales indicates that NPS use is heavily weighted towards young adults aged 16-24 years of which 2.8% stated that they had taken NPS during 2014/15, this compared to 0.9% of the wider group of 16-59 year olds. In drilling down further into the 16-24 year age group, 4% of males aged 16-24 years are identified as the highest concentration of users. It should be noted that the findings did not take into account users aged 15 years or younger, with local intelligence frequently indicating children aged in their early teens are commonly using NPS.

Alcohol referrals continue to show that alcohol misuse is a major issue across Gwent and impacts on both the health of the person and on crime/ASB levels including the night time economy and domestic abuse incidents. The scale of the link between crime and alcohol misuse is currently underreported due to system and subjectivity issues but qualitative information suggests it plays a large role particularly in violent crime and the night time economy.

2.2h Road Traffic Collisions (RTC's)

The following data has been obtained via I Quanta for the Force area of Gwent as a whole. Data is for the twelve month period to March 2016 and includes the key performance indicator of people Killed or Seriously Injured (KSI).

Figure CS17:



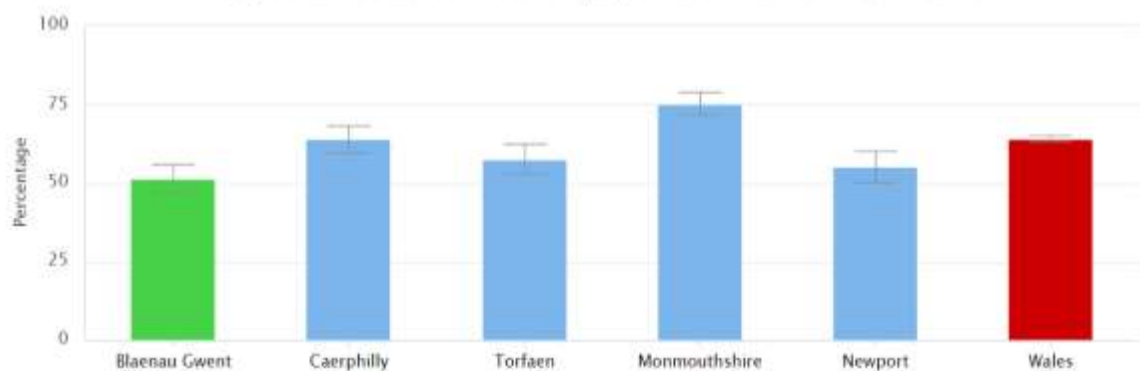
When looking at child casualties, there has been a reduction of 86% in children killed or seriously injured during the year (12 less casualties from 14 to 2).

In terms of people killed during the year, Gwent has seen 16 casualties during the year which is similar to last year (15). Incidents tend to occur on main arterial routes between main towns and cities and many are linked to a mixture of the weather, poor lighting and driver error.

2.2i Perceptions of public safety

The figure below shows how many people across the region feel it is safe for children to play outside in 2014-2015. Across the Gwent region this ranged from around 51.5% in Blaenau Gwent to around 75.1% in Monmouthshire. This compared with around 64% for Wales for the same period.

Figure CS18:



Source: National Survey for Wales

	Blaenau Gwent	Caerphilly	Torfaen	Monmouthshire	Newport	Wales
Value	51.5	63.8	57.5	75.1	55.0	64.0
Lower limit	47.1	59.5	52.6	71.5	50.0	62.9
Upper limit	55.9	68.1	62.3	78.8	59.9	65.0
Robustness	Estimate is precise	Estimate is precise	Estimate is precise	Estimate is precise	Estimate is precise	Estimate is precise

This data might well benefit from further exploration and we would welcome information or research from partners that may help us understand what is affecting parent's perceptions of safety for their children and how this might be improved.

2.2j Offenders

Figure X below shows the criminogenic needs of offenders for Blaenau Gwent in October 2016.

Figure CS19: Identified Criminogenic Needs

No of Service Users Blaenau Gwent	Accommodation is a Need	ETE is a Need	Finance is a Need	Relationships is a Need	Lifestyle is a Need	Drugs is a Need	Alcohol is a Need	Emotional Well-being is a Need	Thinking & Behaviour is a Need	Attitudes is a Need
182	52	49	71	87	128	72	88	88	176	127
%	28.57%	26.92%	39.01%	47.80%	70.33%	39.56%	48.35%	48.35%	96.70%	69.78%

Identified criminogenic needs are addressed either by Wales Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC) through directly commissioned services (accommodation); wider commissioned services (drugs / alcohol) or by Rehabilitation Activity Requirement , using specialist Work books, delivered either one to one or in groups. CRC also deliver Accredited Programmes as

a requirement of a Community Order or Licence following release from custody.

CRC works closely with partners across all the service user needs. For example, Gwent Drug & Alcohol Service (GDAS) deliver CRC's drug and alcohol interventions, they also work closely with Women's Aid and LLamai and commission an accommodation advice service and work closely with the local authorities.

Gwent Police is currently developing a Gwent Child Centred Policing strategy (YOS, Force and PCCs office) that links to the national police chief's child centred policing plan. The areas of focus are as follows:

Children in care and care leavers – a Gwent protocol is in place that has been recognised as good practice nationally (mentioned in Lord Lammings paper July 2016 'in care and out of trouble'). This includes a single point of contact structure in place between police and the ROLAC (reducing offending of looked after children) workers who are based within each Youth Offending Service. Police, ROLAC worker, local authority, carers/foster carers have been trained locally on the protocol and in delivering the 'restorative approach' that it is centred on:

Engagement and relationship – a number of structured engagements in place (i.e. PSLO, youth councils, BME youth forums and in Blaenau Gwent specifically the Children's Grand Council.

Safeguarding – identifying and linking to a range of key areas such as the Safeguarding children's board, missing children team, school liaison (particular focus on cyber inputs and internet safety), MASE (Child Sexual Exploitation) and Human Trafficking.

Stop and Search – various aspects include scrutiny by young people, understanding of data and conversion rates, all of which are captured via the forces stop and search board.

Police Custody – examination of numbers of under 18's in custody and treatment. Gwent Police has a local monitoring and review panel (CiPC - children in Police Custody) which has been developed to look at all aspects of children being taken into custody on a month by month basis.

Youth offending and criminalisation – focus is on 1st time entrants and decision making options regarding offending outcomes (bureau protocol in place, recently revised January 2017)

2.3 Interpretation of data

Substance misuse in Blaenau Gwent remains linked to criminality and victimisation. There is evidence to show that treatment referrals across Gwent have decreased over the period with Alcohol and Heroin being the Primary Substances of note. The prominence of heroin referrals is also seen in DIP data positive drug tests whilst in custody showing the links between drug abuse and acquisitive crime, which is a significant contributory factor behind local acquisitive crime fluctuations.

One of the most common characteristics of adult reoffenders on a Community Order or Suspended Sentence Order in Wales is drug misuse. There has also been a large rise in cannabis, solvents and hallucinogens together with the increase in the use of New Psychoactive substances all of which impact on local crime and disorder trends.

Further interpretation is documented against each of the critical issues below.

2.4 What are the critical issues for public services to address?

The critical issues that need to be addressed will support our key priorities as follows:

- Ensuring people feel safe in their community, by preventing crime and anti-social behaviour and by reducing the fear of crime,
- Protecting the vulnerable,
- Making our communities cohesive.

The following categories require an enhanced level of partnership involvement:

Blaenau Gwent has a number of areas that feature highly in the Welsh Govts WIMD. It is crucial that we adopt a 'Whole Place' approach to dealing with deprivation and criminality in these areas, in order to improve the lives of citizens who live there. A collaborative programme of crime and anti-social behaviour reduction should be instigated and sustained in those areas jointly identified as being most at risk. This must involve dealing with Domestic Abuse and Sexual violence, Anti-social behaviour including illegal use of off road bikes, substance abuse and arson. There should be extra support for those people who are particularly vulnerable.

Crime

In line with our commitment to promote awareness of and to prevent, protect and support vulnerable victims of gender based violence, domestic abuse and sexual violence, the following areas have been identified as critical issues:

- Domestic abuse related crime. Violence, including violence without injury presents a long term challenge to the partnership.

- The specific areas of offending are Abertillery and Brynmawr. Types of offences within this crime type include theft from person, other sexual offences, all other theft and public order.
- Grass fires – although the picture is improving arson continues to be a short to medium term critical issue which impacts upon the local economy and tourism. Lives and property are put at risk, public services are adversely affected.
- There is a great deal of concern around the use of off road motorcycles. Increased reporting of damage to private and common land impacts upon the livelihood of rural landowners and prevents the local community from enjoying open spaces.

3. What research exists to help us develop a response to these issues?

To date the research base for this sub section has centred on the Gwent PCC's strategic assessment, data from the LGDU and feedback from Phase 1& 2 of the "Blaenau Gwent We Want" engagement work. Further analysis and research has been conducted against the specific priority areas of ASB and domestic abuse related crime. This analysis is presented to partners via quarterly updates. Partnership problem solving groups which provide feedback and context to the specific issues which allows us to further understand the impact on our communities and vulnerable victims.

4. Five ways of working

4.1 Collaboration

<i>Critical issue</i>	<i>Adds no value</i>	<i>Adds some value</i>	<i>Adds moderate value</i>	<i>Critical to tackle the issue</i>	<i>Rationale</i>
<i>ASB</i>				<i>X</i>	<i>The Police are not able to effectively deal with ASB in isolation. It is well documented that to successfully address this issue a broad partnership approach is required, involving several partners to prevent, divert and enforce, along with a wrap- around support to repeat vulnerable victims.</i>
<i>Domestic abuse related crime</i>				<i>X</i>	<i>Support from several public services and third sector in order to support victims is critical. Shared partnership learning from DHR's is fundamental to long term prevention.</i>
<i>Arson/off road bikes</i>				<i>X</i>	<i>Effective arson reduction (in particular grass fires) cannot be achieved unless a multi-agency approach is adopted to deliver education ,diversion and enforcement.</i>

4.2 a) Integration – links with themes

<i>Critical issue</i>	<i>Economic</i>	<i>Social</i>	<i>Environmental</i>	<i>Cultural</i>
ASB	X <i>for rationale see Prosperous below</i>	x <i>for rationale see Equal below</i>	X <i>for rationale see Globally responsible below.</i>	
Domestic abuse		X <i>for rationale see Healthier below</i>		
Arson/Off road bikes	X <i>for rationale see Prosperous below</i>	X <i>for rationale see Equal below</i>	X <i>for rationale see Globally responsible below.</i>	

4.2b) Integration –Contribution to the National Goal



Supporting Commentary

Prosperous - Low levels of crime and ASB are key drivers in attracting inward investment. Employers and retailers will only be attracted to the area if they can be confident the area is safe for their businesses and staff.

Healthier- It is well documented that the impact on victims of domestic violence significantly affects their mental health and wellbeing over a long period of time. This critical issue falls under healthier as there is a requirement to promote a society in which all members of the community including vulnerable victims have freedom of choice and their future health requirements are understood.

Equal- Youths who become involved in ASB are clearly unable to fulfil their early potential due to their background behaviour and potential lack of support within the family. There is a clear link between victims of domestic violence who are subjected to coercion and controlling behaviour are less able to fulfil their potential.

Cohesive- In order to promote attractive safe and well connected communities there is a need to minimise the commission of acts of ASB. Increased ASB adds to the fear of crime and reduces public confidence within a specific neighbourhood.

4.3 Thinking to the Long Term

Consider the known / likely / potential impact on well-being in the short, medium and long term.

Short term (1-2)	<i>Both ASB and DV can be addressed in the short term and may require immediate safeguarding and interventions.</i> <i>Arson/off road bikes –short terms solutions will need to be jointly implemented as public confidence will be affected due to the widespread media coverage.</i>
Medium term (2-5 years)	<i>ASB is a fluctuating picture which can be fluid amongst different areas within communities at different periods of the year. Plans to address ASB should focus on longer term solutions involving diversionary activities over a sustained period of time.</i> <i>Arson/off road bikes – Needs to attract a medium term local approach which compliments the all wales partnership approach.</i>
Long term (10 years plus)	<i>DV – Cycle of abuse, children of victims who witness DV are potentially more likely to become involved in later life.</i>

4.4 Prevention

ASB - There is clear evidence that a preventative approach is critical to addressing ongoing instances of ASB. This prevention can take many different forms but should specially include:

- Youth diversion via programs like positive futures and street games
- Educational interventions delivered via schools liaisons officers
- Early access mediation for neighbourhood based ASB connected to ongoing disputes.

There are also preventative programmes to advise people how to stay safe such as the All Wales School Liaison Core Programme(AWSLCP), recognising the role that schools and education can play in tackling ASB, substance misuse and problems associated with personal safety.

The AWSLCP approach is a preventative, generalised and broad based one that is focussed on formal lessons delivered by uniformed police in the classroom, together with supportive policing activities

Domestic violence

A key element of preventative work around this area is to promote confidence for victims to come forward and report abuse. This is currently achieved by involving a number of support groups such as GDAS/team around the family and youth offending services.

Operation 'Daws Glaw' is an all wales multi-agency approach toward preventing Arson (grass fires).

4.5 Involvement

During the 'Blaenau Gwent We Want' Public Engagement Programme 323 (8%) comments were categorised into our 'Safety' theme, making it the 4th most popular theme overall.

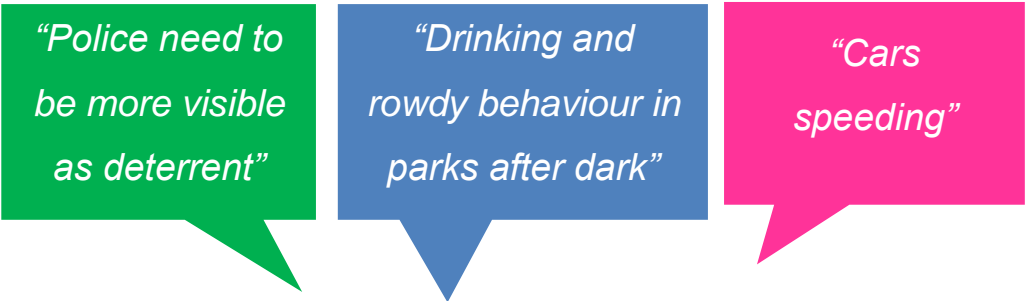
When we asked people what would make Blaenau Gwent a better place, increased police presence (122 comments, 5%) and less ASB/Crime (82 comments, 3%) were both in the top 10 most popular topics (5th and 9th respectively). General safety, such as traffic measures, street lighting and CCTV etc. also received 40 comments (2%).

General Safety was the 7th most popular topic (27 comments, 7%) when we asked what things are important for people to live well and enjoy their lives.

Some of the key issues emerging were the need for a greater police presence, general anti-social behaviour on the streets and in our parks (see note below on Play Sufficiency Assessment), speeding cars, off-road motorbikes, and drug and alcohol misuse.

Comments about Safety were received consistently throughout the 4 main valley areas, however our topic Police Presence was mentioned more within the Ebbw Fawr and Lower Ebbw Fach Valleys and general ASB was more prominent within Upper Ebbw Fach and Sirhowy.

Examples of comments we received:



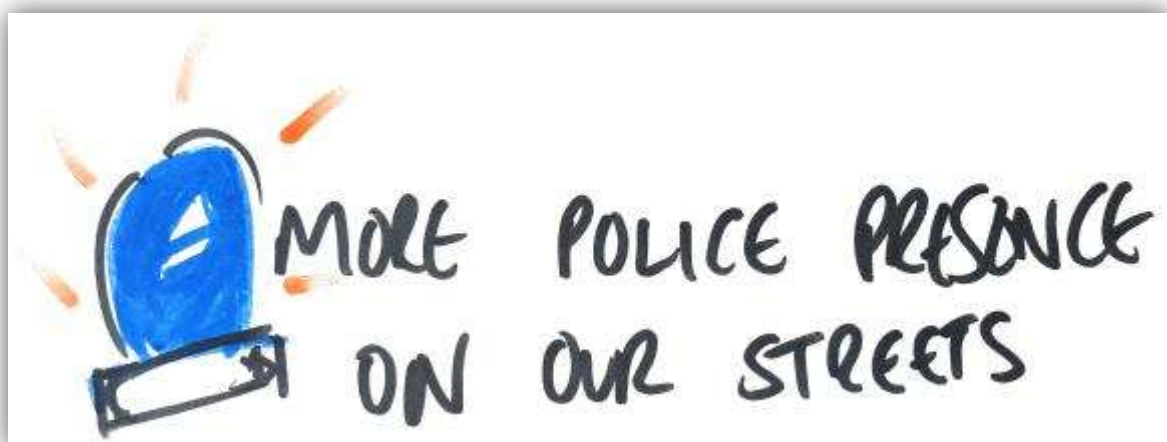
"Police need to be more visible as deterrent"

"Drinking and rowdy behaviour in parks after dark"

"Cars speeding"

Specific comments on barriers to play from children and young people were noted in the Play Sufficiency Assessment. Please see [Baby and Children's Health and Development](#).

Selection of relevant images from 'Blaenau Gwent We Want' process



5. What is currently being done to tackle this issue?

5.1 Is this issue currently being tackled in partnership?

The critical issues highlighted at 2.4 feature 4 are currently being explored by the Fair & Safe group within the single integrated plan overseen by the PSB. This work includes the following areas:

- Targeting specific volume crimes that have a high impact, and Identifying “threat, risk and harm” to develop a partnership approach to resolving issues
- Supporting key vulnerable neighbourhoods and communities affected by crime and anti-social behaviour.
- Promote awareness of, and to prevent, protect and support victims of gender-based violence, domestic abuse and sexual violence
- Tackling discrimination, harassment and victimisation in the community
- Ensuring people feel safe in their community, by preventing crime and anti-social behaviour and by reducing the fear of crime,
- Protecting the vulnerable,
- Making our communities cohesive.

5.2 What wider assets could assist in tackling this issue?

ASB – wider assets could include local authority, assist with new ASB legislation. Trading standards (test purchasing substance misuse) YOS, retail groups. Town centre management groups. Street pastors, GAVO.

Domestic violence – There is currently a broad spectrum of partners who support the DV process in terms of offender management and support to vulnerable victims.

6. What this tells us about Well-being in Blaenau Gwent

- The Blaenau Gwent area has seen a 6 % increase in crime reduction in recorded crime during the last 12 months.
- It's crime rate is 71 crimes per 1000 population above the Gwent average
- Anti-social behaviour Blaenau has seen a 15 % reduction with levels at 3181 a reduction of 546 incidents.
- Domestic abuse related crimes have seen an 18% increase during this period.
- Whilst Blaenau Gwent specific data was not available it is likely that the level data on emerging threats such as cybercrime is equally relevant to this area.
- Increases in sexual offences have been seen within the area and explanations have been provided for these increases
- The area has seen a reduction in fire incidents during this last year and is attributed to the close working relationship between key partners within the Fair and safe group a sub group of the PSB.
- The report highlights the continued risks presented by new psychoactive substances, with use heavily weighted towards young adults aged 16-24 years.
- Alcohol referrals continue to show that substance misuse is a major issue across Gwent impacting on the health of residents. The report also suggests links between its use crime and antisocial behaviour.
- Data from the National Survey for Wales highlights that only 51% of respondents feel it safe for children to play outside. We do not know why this is the case nor its impact on wellbeing issues such as childhood obesity.

Section 5.8: Homes and Households

1. Overview

A home is a vital part of people's lives; it affects their health, wellbeing, quality of life and the opportunities available to them.

Housing is central to communities; it drives the demand for local services, shops and facilities and can attract outward investment. Without a settled home people may have difficulties accessing employment, education, training and health services

Housing has an impact on the environment. Development needs to progress in a way that is sensitive to the local area, limits energy consumption and embraces a sustainable approach to planning and design.

The topography of Blaenau Gwent can bring challenges to housing developments in terms of the industrial legacy and the steep inclines - but in many ways these are the primary assets of the area in terms of heritage and superb scenery.

2. What is the data saying?

2.1 At a Blaenau Gwent level

There are 32,367 dwellings in Blaenau Gwent. Approximately 5% are vacant, which is above the Welsh average of 4%, but this has decreased since 2001, where it stood at 6%.

A large percentage of dwellings are terraced properties (average 52%) though there is considerable variation across the area – for example, 74% in Abertillery compared with 21.5% in Rassau.



Figure H01: Housing Type

Household Type	Blaenau Gwent	Wales
Detached house/bungalow	11.0%	27.7%
Semi-detached house/bungalow	26.7%	31.0%
Terraced house (including end terrace)	52.2%	27.8%
Purpose-built flats/tenement	8.0%	9.6%
Converted / shared house (inc. bed sits)	0.9%	2.4%
Flat in commercial building	1.2%	1.0%
Caravans/mobile home etc.	0.1%	0.4%

Source: Census 2011

Over 62% of households are owner occupied, and largely unchanged since 2001.

Blaenau Gwent Council transferred its stock of council accommodation to Tai Calon in 2010. The combined number of rented Council/Registered Social Landlord accommodation has dropped from 28.8% in 2001 to 24% in 2011.

The number of people renting from a private landlord has risen significantly from 6.1% in 2001 to 11.4% in 2011.

Figure H02: Household Tenure

Household Tenure										Blaenau Gwent	Wales
Owner occupied households										62.1%	67.7%
Own outright										32.9%	35.4%
Owns with mortgage or loan										29.1%	32.0%
Shared ownership										0.1%	0.3%
Rented households										36.8%	30.6%
Council (local authority)										11.1%	9.8%
Social landlord										12.9%	6.6%
Private landlord / letting agency										11.4%	12.7%
Private Other										1.4%	1.5%

Source: Census 2011

In September 2016, the average house price in Blaenau Gwent was £76,377.

The average house price does not give a full picture of the affordability of privately owned housing, because these figures do not take into account average earnings. The Office for National Statistics have provided statistics which show that Blaenau Gwent has the most affordable housing compared with Local Authorities across both England and Wales.

During 2015-16, there were 124 new build properties completed in Blaenau Gwent. This figure increased by 22 from 2014-15.

According to the October 2016 Welsh Housing Quality Standard release, 5662 of Tai Calon's 6132 residences are compliant; none of the stock failed, with the remainder being judged 'acceptable fails'. This compares very favourably compared to other large scale voluntary housing transfers across Wales. Melin, Linc and United Welsh RSLs also have no non-complaint compliant stock.

Energy efficiency

Blaenau Gwent ranks second in Wales for households that have central heating (99.2% up from 97% in 2001).

In 2014, 535 megawatt hours of domestic gas and electricity were consumed in Blaenau Gwent. This figure has decreased by 17 since 2013. Blaenau Gwent households have consistently used less energy than the Wales average since records in 2010, though it is important to think about whether this is linked to fuel poverty.

Accessibility

The Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) is available to owner occupiers, landlords and private tenants who may get assistance to carry out adaptations.



The table below shows the number of DFG grants has remained relatively stable over the last 5 years, though it has decreased relative to Caerphilly and Torfaen.

Figure H03: Disabled Facilities Grant

	Blaenau Gwent	Caerphilly	Torfaen	Monmouthshire	Newport
FY 2010-11	121	198	124	110	158
FY 2011-12	113	182	123	98	131
FY 2012-13	100	187	122	91	157
FY 2013-14	117	187	144	88	209
FY 2014-15	116	207	141	88	156

Gypsy and traveller accommodation

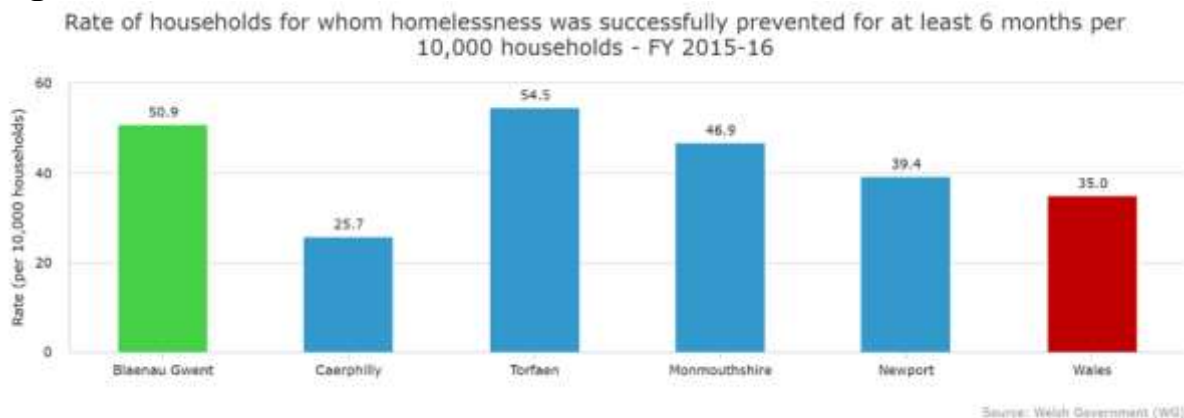
There are currently 20 Local Authority authorised gypsy and traveller pitches with a further 7 on gypsies' own land and deemed "unauthorised development". Local Authorities have a duty to undertake gypsy and traveller accommodation assessments under the Housing (Wales) Act 2014.

Homelessness

Blaenau Gwent has above the Wales average for the number of homeless people decided to be eligible and in priority rate (4.77 compared to 3.89). It is also the highest in Wales for the number of households assessed as threatened with homelessness within 56 days (86.7 per 10,000 households,

compared with the Wales average of 53.7). However, in 2015/16, the rate of households for whom homelessness was successfully prevented (for at least 6 months per 10,000 households) was 51%. This is high compared to other local authorities in the region, where the lowest was 26%. The Wales average for the same period is 35%.

Figure H04: Homelessness



2.2 At a neighbourhood area level

Whilst some data has been analysed at a neighbourhood area level at 2.1 more could be explored dependant on the priorities and objectives set by the Blaenau Gwent Public Service Board.

2.3 Interpretation of data

Many of the housing challenges that Blaenau Gwent faces resound across Wales. Key challenges include:

Housing demand

The demand for housing continues to outstrip supply across the UK, and the current economic climate has increased the demand for affordable housing. The Welsh Government has pledged to deliver an additional 20,000 affordable homes during the next term of Government, of which 6,000 will be Help to Buy.

Private rented sector

The private rented sector is growing nationally. The Housing (Wales) Act 2014 introduced compulsory registration for private rented sector landlords and letting agents, and the Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016 has been designed to provide clarity of rights and responsibilities for both tenants and landlords. As part of this, the 'Rent Smart Wales' scheme will, for the first time, allow local councils to fully identify all of the private rented properties within their local area, making it easier for them to work closely with landlords on ensuring high rental standards are being met. The number of people in rented accommodation has almost doubled in Blaenau Gwent between 2001 and 2011.

Homelessness

Existing changes to the welfare system will continue to have an impact on tenants, landlords and local authorities, and further changes by the UK government are to be introduced, which are likely to have a particularly negative affect on people aged under 35. Transitional funding from the Welsh Government to help address the impact of welfare reforms will cease after 2017/18. This needs to be very closely monitored, to avoid a reduction in the positive performance of Blaenau Gwent in preventing homelessness.

Housing Quality

There is an ongoing need to improve old stock to meet quality and energy efficiency standards. Whilst adding a distinctive character to the area, the dominance of older terraced housing does bring challenges in terms of maintenance and energy efficiency. The data shows that Blaenau Gwent is performing relatively well in relation to the Welsh Housing Quality Standards for Social Housing.

Energy efficiency

In 2015/16 BGCBC successfully secured almost £2.7 million in capital funding from the *Warm Homes Arbed* programme, which levers energy company obligation funding into Wales to achieve energy savings in energy inefficient homes. That said, there are still housing challenges for Blaenau Gwent in terms of the high number of older terraced housing stock, where lifting energy standards can be challenging.

Access and Support

A range of housing support is available to those with health and social care needs within Blaenau Gwent, the main vehicle being ***Supporting People programme***; details of this are outlined in the regional Population Needs Assessment (PNA).

The PNA also highlights the importance of ***Care and Repair*** services and the multi-agency ***In One Place*** Programme (a collaborative approach launched in 2014 to improve the provision of accommodation).

Managing Accessible Housing

BGCBC does not have a formal Accessible Housing Register. Need is managed through local Housing staff meeting regularly with Occupational Therapists to consider adaptation requirements and priority need and looking for solutions through new build or liaising with RSLs. The alternative of an Accessible Housing Register would require additional resources to administer.

The number of Disabled Facilities is likely to drop in future as the resource available for this has been reduced from £750,000 in 2015/16 to £675,000 for 16/17, linked to required Council spending reductions.

The impact of demographic change

In Blaenau Gwent, accommodation for older people can be particularly affected by some of factors raised above, such as the steep land and the older housing stock.

The impact of changing demographics on the profile of tenure has also been raised, with potentially larger numbers living in the private rented sector in future. As older people represent a very significant and growing percentage of the local population this is something that cannot be ignored in terms of the range, location and quality of accommodation available. The Ageing Well in Wales (AWW) programme also highlights the importance of housing for older people and the negative impact on physical and mental health where quality, affordable accommodation is not in place.

Blaenau Gwent has an ageing population and the proportion of the population with a Limiting Long Term Illness is likely to increase. Blaenau Gwent needs to increase the level of Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) funding that has been accessed, (which is high compared to other Local Authorities). A recent report by Care and Repair in England highlights that the amount of DFG funding available is significantly less than the amount required to support eligible individuals. There is research evidence that shows that home adaptations save public money in a number of ways and is an important component in promoting the wellbeing of future generations – supporting the fundamental principles of the Social Services and Wellbeing Act.

Welfare Reform

Changes to the welfare system began in April 2011 when Tax Credit entitlements were amended, a number of Incapacity Benefits were transferred to Employment Support Allowance (ESA) or Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) and the Housing Benefit (HB) entitlement for private tenants was changed to the Local Housing Allowance (LHA). The Welfare Reform Act 2012

introduced a range of additional changes, including removal of the spare room subsidy, Universal Credit and removal of direct housing payments. Changes to the welfare system have, and will continue to have; an impact on tenants, landlords and local authorities and these will need to be monitored closely.

2.4 What are the critical issues for public services to consider?

- To ensure that people have high-quality, warm, secure and energy-efficient homes to live in.
- Enabling access to affordable finance.
- Maximising inward investment opportunities.
- Using all partner organisations resources in a creative and innovative manner to support the development of new homes.
- Supporting vulnerable households.
- Capitalising on infrastructure developments so that Blaenau Gwent is an area of choice with full access to good quality leisure and lifestyle amenities.

3. What research exists to help us develop a response to this/ these issues?

More than Homes is the Local Housing Strategy for Blaenau Gwent (2014 – 2018) is the locally agreed direction for housing requirements in the area which takes into account national policies and priorities and is based on local evidence.

The Welsh Government recently set up an Expert Group on Housing an Ageing Population which is advising the Minister with responsibility for Housing. The Expert Group recently issued a summary of findings from engagement with older people across Wales, which amongst other things highlighted the need for better information in relation to housing needs and housing stock, better integration, improved joint working and planning processes. They also stress the issues of location and mobility and of older people getting around *outside* of their home ensuring housing policy and resources are better aligned with Health, Social Care and Well-Being of Future Generations policies.

4. Five ways of working

4.1: Collaboration

<i>Adds no value</i>	<i>Adds some value</i>	<i>Adds moderate value</i>	<i>Critical to tackle the issue</i>
		✓	

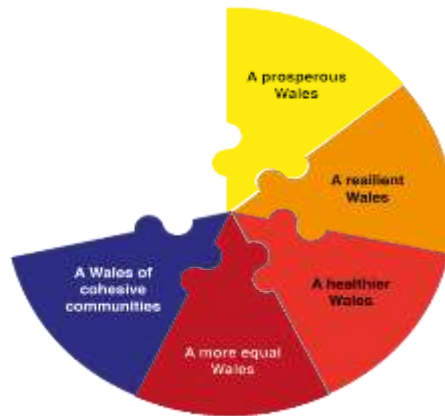
The strategic housing function is an enabling role, with the local authority working in partnership with other public, private and third sector organisations to deliver suitable housing and to develop innovative solutions to address local housing needs. The on-going successful delivery of affordable homes is achieved through a partnership approach with the local authority, registered social landlords and Welsh Government working together.

4.2a: Integration – links with themes

<i>Economic</i>	<i>Social</i>	<i>Environmental</i>	<i>Cultural</i>
	✓	✓	

The contribution that housing makes towards supporting educational attainment, employment, improving health and wellbeing and increasing life chances is key.

4.2b) Integration –Contribution to the National Goal



Supporting Commentary

Access to good quality homes contribute to the well-being goals as homes provide the bedrock of our communities. A home enables residents to thrive and access the support services that they need, along with provide a firm, sustainable foundations for families to grow and prosper.

4.3 Thinking to the Long Term

<i>Short term</i> <i>(1-2)</i>	Immediate impact for residents who are experiencing homelessness and require support to sustain their homes or tenancies
<i>Medium term</i> <i>(2-5 years)</i>	Positive impact on all aspects of well-being
<i>Long term</i> <i>(10 years plus)</i>	Positive impact on all aspects of well-being, for families and individual's.

4.4 Prevention

The availability of good quality, safe and warm affordable homes can help to prevent problems occurring or getting worse. A good quality, affordable and suitable home can be the catalyst a household needs to prosper.

4.5 Involvement

During the 'Blaenau Gwent We Want' Public Engagement Programme our theme 'Housing' was the 13th most popular overall with 98 comments (3%).

When we asked what would make Blaenau Gwent a better place our topic 'housing' was the 13th most popular with 72 comments (3%). Most comments were about the need to improve the quality and availability of the social housing stock in the area. There were also some comments about making housing more affordable for young people.

People who responded within Lower Ebbw Fach (18, 4%) were more likely to comment about Housing than other areas; Ebbw Fawr (18, 2%), Upper Ebbw Fach (2%), Sirhowy (9, 2%).

Some popular comments:



Selection of relevant images from 'Blaenau Gwent We Want' process



5. What is currently being done to tackle this issue?

5.1 Is this issue currently being tackled in partnership?

Through the Single Integrated Plan the following actions are being delivered in partnership as part of the priority to 'Improve the quality and mix of homes':

- Identify current and future accommodation needs
- Improve quality of existing homes
- Provide new affordable homes to buy and rent
- Deliver programmes of activity to address identified need, offer choice and alternative options

These actions link to the priorities of '*More than Homes*' the Local Housing Strategy for Blaenau Gwent (2014 – 2018):

- To improve the supply of new homes to buy and rent
- To improve the quality and standards of homes
- To meet the needs of vulnerable households

5.2 What wider assets could assist in tackling this issue?

Wider assets that could be used to tackle the issue will be explored through further response analysis work dependant on priority setting of the PSB.

6. What this tells us about Well-being in Blaenau Gwent

Access to good quality homes contribute to the well-being as homes provide the bedrock of our communities. A home enables residents to thrive and access the support services that they need, along with provide a firm, sustainable foundations for families to grow and prosper.

Section 5.9: Local Transport Links and Interconnectivity

1. Overview

Transport and interconnectivity are really important aspects for Blaenau Gwent residents to be able to live well and enjoy life.

Whilst Transport and Interconnectivity was not an area identified as part of the common data set developed and agreed by the Local Government Data Unit at a Gwent level. Transport and Interconnectivity was noted as being an important area of concern for people who participated in Phase 1 of the Blaenau Gwent We Want Engagement Programme.

Information to inform this section of the Well-Being Assessment has been drawn from the former South East Wales Transport Alliance's Outline of the Regional Transport Plan published in November 2011.

2. What is the data saying?

2.1 At a Blaenau Gwent level

To date there was no information relating to transport links & interconnectivity available from the Local Government Data Unit at a Blaenau Gwent level.

More than two thirds of private journeys are by car, up from about a half in 1990. The road system across South East Wales can be seen as a hierarchy, with motorways and trunk roads being like the main arteries of the system, but local roads are more important to many people in their everyday lives.

In broad terms, roads in South East Wales carry three times as much traffic, and are in three times in worse condition than roads elsewhere in Wales. This is highlighted below in Figure TI01: Residual life of A roads.

Figure TI01: Residual life of A roads

	< 1 years	1-4 years	4-19 years	>19 years
Bridgend	9%	7%	21%	63%
Blaenau Gwent	14%	2%	5%	78%
Caerphilly	10%	3%	15%	72%
Cardiff	17%	10%	27%	48%
Merthyr Tydfil	3%	4%	18%	75%
Monmouthshire	27%	4%	11%	58%
Newport	13%	2%	20%	65%
Rhondda Cynon Taf	11%	9%	22%	56%
Torfaen	6%	4%	13%	77%
Vale of Glamorgan	8%	9%	13%	57%

Source: Condition survey data supplied by local authorities

Access

A survey conducted by South East Wales Transport Alliance asked public transport users the question “do you live within half a mile of a bus or train station?”¹

In Blaenau Gwent, buses (84% of replies) were much more accessible to people’s homes rather than trains (0% of replies).

¹ The sample is not entirely typical of the whole population.

Figure TI02: SEWTA Survey 2005

	Bus	Train
Distance to bus or train	Under ½ mile %	Under ½ mile %
Bridgend	84	0
Blaenau Gwent	88	17
Caerphilly	90	8
Cardiff	93	23
Merthyr Tydfil	90	11
Monmouthshire	71	8
Newport	89	5
Rhondda Cynon Taf	84	25
Torfaen	94	6
Vale of Glamorgan	81	32

Source: SEWTA Survey 2005

Affordability

Car Ownership

As outlined in the table below a significant percentage of households in Blaenau Gwent do not own a car or a van, which is above the Wales average. The percentage of households who own two or more cars / vans is also below the Wales average:

Figure TI03: Car Ownership

Car Ownership	Blaenau Gwent	Wales
Households with:		
No car / van	29.0%	22.9%
1 car / van	43.8%	43.0%
2+ car / vans	27.3%	34.1%
All cars / vans in the area	32, 478	1,597,823

Even in households, with low income levels (3rd decile) (1st decile being the poorest of households to 10th decile being the richest of households), almost 60% have access to a car. 29% of people living in Blaenau Gwent do not own a car. The most severe problems created by low car ownership are very much concentrated amongst the poorest in society.

Transport expenditure in rich households is proportionately much higher than it is in poor households. The richest 10% of households spend £142 per week on transport, 15% of their total expenditure. This is only slightly less than the total expenditure on all items of the poorest 10% of households, who spend about £13 each week on transport, that is 9% of their total expenditure. Of 12 areas of expenditure (food, housing etc.) transport is first among the richest 10% of households but only fifth among the poorest 10%.

Concessionary transport schemes

Concessionary transport schemes available to people living in the area includes:

Disability Bus Pass scheme (also available to people who are aged 60 years and over) which offers free travel on local buses.

Dial A Ride – a community transport scheme provided by Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations, which is delivered by volunteers. The service helps people with mobility issues, and community groups living in the area, remain independent and stay well connected. The service covers transporting people to shops, friends and families, hospital and doctor appointments and other social activities. The service is mainly run by volunteers.

Regional Transport Developments

The following list outlines regional developments which are being considered as part of a strategic, joined-up and collaborative approach towards improving the accessibility, availability, infrastructure and quality of Transport Links and Interconnectivity across South East Wales. The programmes look to achieve social, economic, and environmental outcomes using a long-term approach, which will lead to positive impacts being realised in areas such as Blaenau Gwent:

South East Wales City Deal²;

Regional Transport Consortia (Wales Transport Strategy)³;

South East Wales Metro Project⁴

Welsh Government Active Travel Act – Integrated Network Mapping to improve walking and cycling routes⁵

This report notes that further research and analysis will become available over the life course of these strategic, large scale developments, of which, this can be used to support further analytical work around Transport Links and Interconnectivity for the Blaenau Gwent area.

² <http://gov.wales/newsroom/finance1/2016/160315-city-deal/?lang=en>

³ <http://gov.wales/topics/transport/planning-strategies/?lang=en>

⁴ <http://gov.wales/topics/transport/public/metro/?lang=en>

⁵ <http://gov.wales/topics/transport/walking-cycling/activetravelact/?lang=en> & <http://gov.wales/topics/transport/walking-cycling/activetravelact/active-travel-board/?lang=en>

Changing levels in traffic (future trends)

SEWTA's Regional Public Transport Opinion Survey provides estimates of different modes of transport used. The sample is known to be biased towards public transport users but shows the relative importance between use of bus and rail to car and walking.

Figure TI04: Mode split of transport

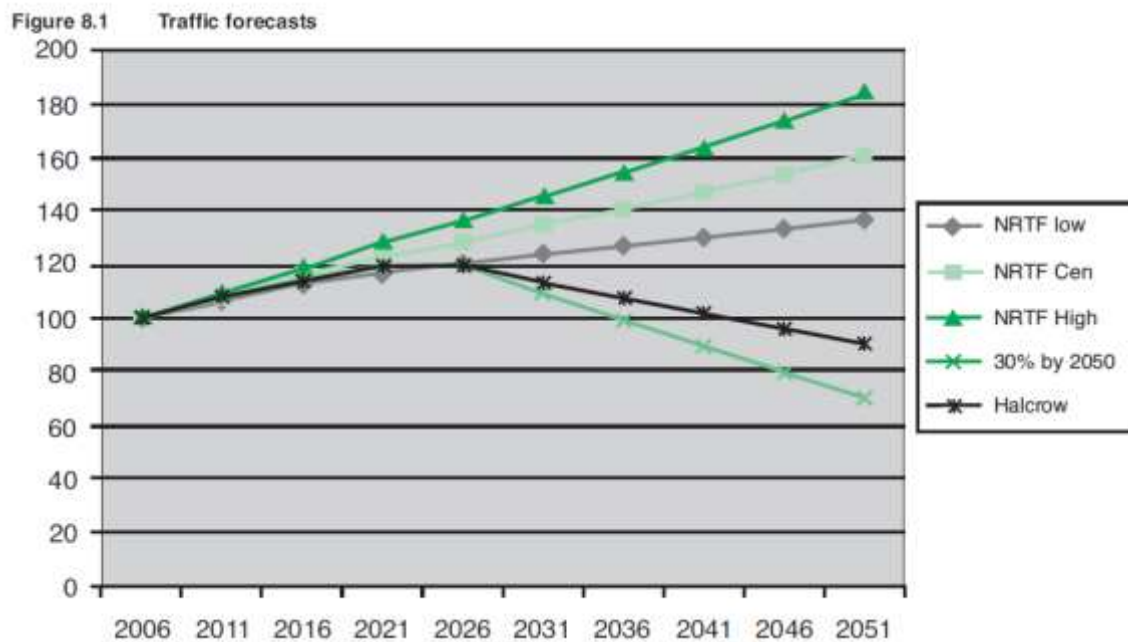
All purposes mode	Car	Bus	Train	Cycle	Walk
Bridgend	52	22	4	2	20
Blaenau Gwent	50	23	13	2	13
Caerphilly	46	27	10	3	15
Cardiff	38	22	11	8	22
Merthyr Tydfil	51	29	4	2	14
Monmouthshire	60	12	9	4	15
Newport	47	29	6	1	16
Rhondda Cynon Taf	43	24	11	2	20
Torfaen	44	31	7	2	15
Vale of Glamorgan	50	17	15	3	15

Traffic forecasts

The National Road Traffic Forecasts provides estimates of future traffic levels up to 2031; the South East Wales Regional Transport Plan extends this forecast to 2051. Future traffic levels provide information that can help determine expected rates of congestion (which has an estimated £600m cost to the economy across Wales each year) in relation to an unavoidable growth in traffic.

Figure TI05 below also outlines the changes in traffic levels, but also highlights the reduction in traffic levels required in order to produce a substantial reduction in carbon emissions from traffic.

Figure TI05: Forecast for Traffic



Research suggests it is not practical to provide for continued unlimited traffic growth partly because of its environmental consequences but also because we it is too costly to redevelop road infrastructure on the scale needed to meet the demand for increased traffic.

SEWTA says that whilst technology improvements will contribute most to reduce carbon emissions, the need to reduce road traffic levels in absolute terms remains.

Changes in modes of transport will be key in supporting the reduction in carbon emissions, with increased use of cycling and walking being fundamental in a) reducing traffic levels and b) reducing carbon emissions.

2.3 Interpretation of data

A significant percentage of households in Blaenau Gwent do not own a car, or a van (29%) leading to a higher dependency on public, community and private transport.

Many vulnerable groups (such as older people) heavily rely on public and community transport schemes to enable them to get around the area, as private transport (such as taxis may not be an affordable option).

2.4 What are the critical issues for public services to consider?

The critical issues for public services to consider are as follows:

- Consideration needs to be given to the fact that the most severe problems created by low car ownership are much more concentrated amongst the poorest in society.
- Investment in community transport schemes will be critical to ensuring people are able to access public services and connect effectively to society.
- Whilst there are a number of regional transport infrastructure plans active in South Wales, and at a national level there is more emphasis on building more effective transport solutions to ensure transport is more interconnected with key amenities available in the area. It is really important that people across Blaenau Gwent are able to contribute effectively and have a local voice in terms of ensuring future developments are affordable and accessible.
- Feedback from the Blaenau Gwent We Want Engagement programme suggested issues such as existing transport services within the area need to be better aligned, and more regular. Limitations of transport options could lead to people having to plan journeys well in advance and increases dependency.
- Increasing future traffic levels due to the unavoidable growth in traffic will be critical to addressing economic, as well as environmental impacts (carbon footprint).

3. What research exists to help us develop a response to this/ these issues?

The majority of research relating to Transport and Interconnectivity is available at either a national, or regional level. This is due to the number of significant, strategic, large scale developments planned to be implemented across either a National, or Regional footprint, with the aim of achieving long-term social, economic and environmental outcomes which will look to have a positive impact on areas such as Blaenau Gwent.

However, there are large gaps in research and information available at the local level on Transport Links and Interconnectivity, which can provide a systematic examination of the concerns raised by people through the Blaenau Gwent We Want Engagement Programme.

It is proposed that should the PSB which to examine this area further, research and analysis should be taken forward which explores Transport Links and Interconnectivity at the Blaenau Gwent level. This research should consider not only the existing needs of the community, but also give regard to future supply and demand trends (for example, more community transport schemes may be required to support Blaenau Gwent's ageing population).

To date the research base for this sub section has centred on South East Wales Transport Alliance Regional Transport Plan and data from AECOM Baseline Economic Analysis for South East Wales published in 2015. It also includes feedback from Phase 1 of the "Blaenau Gwent We Want" engagement work.

4. Five ways of working

4.1 Collaboration

<i>Adds no value</i>	<i>Adds some value</i>	<i>Adds moderate value</i>	<i>Critical to tackle the issue</i>
			X

Collaboration will be critical to tackle the issues and priorities identified within this section. For example, developing effective transport solutions will need to be done in partnership with Welsh Government, Regional Transport Consortia, Private and Community transport as well as Blaenau Gwent Citizens

4.2 a) Integration – links with themes

<i>Economic</i>	<i>Social</i>	<i>Environmental</i>	<i>Cultural</i>
X	X	X	X

- Economic – Transport is key to supporting economic activity, working households (including travel to work) and business.
- Social – Transport is important to enabling Blaenau Gwent citizens to be able to live well and is key to supporting people to be able to access public services, socially connect with society.
- Environmental – Transport has a strong relationship to climate change, where an effective public transport system contributes to a reduction in harmful emissions.
- Cultural – Transport is a key enabler for people to be able to participate in social and recreational activities; also creating a good transport infrastructure will have a positive impact on tourism within the area.

4.2b) Integration –Contribution to the National Goal



Supporting Commentary

4.3 Thinking to the Long Term

<i>Short term</i> <i>(1-2)</i>	
<i>Medium term</i> <i>(2-5 years)</i>	Developing initiatives to improve access to public transport are unlikely to be realised quickly and will require longer term integrated planning
<i>Long term</i> <i>(10 years plus)</i>	

4.4 Prevention

If identified as a PSB priority further work will be undertaken as part of our response analysis to fully understand the existing gaps that need to be addressed in partnership. This will as part of our Logic approach identify costs and benefits of any proposed solutions.

4.5 Involvement

During the 'Blaenau Gwent We Want' Public Engagement Programme our theme 'transport' was the 6th most popular theme overall with 301 comments (8%). When we asked what would make Blaenau Gwent a better place improvement to transport was the 5th most popular comment (222, 8%). Transport was also the 4th most popular comment when we asked what things are important for people to live well and enjoy their lives (48, 12%).

There were 2 key topics identified within transport; Transport Infrastructure and Public Transport. When we asked what would make Blaenau Gwent a better place our topic improvements to public transport was the 4th most popular amongst residents with 128 comments (5%). Improvements to transport infrastructure was less popular with 47 comments (2%) making it 18th most popular overall. However when we asked what things are important to people to live well and enjoy their lives transport infrastructure was 6th most popular with 30 comments (7%) and public transport was 9th most popular with 18 comments (4%).

For transport infrastructure the most common theme emerging was road maintenance and availability of parking. For public transport most of the comments we received were about more accessible bus/train times and the need to align the train and bus times. Improved transport between valley towns and Cardiff/Newport was also a popular subject. Some people also mentioned that the cost of public transport was too high.

Transport was also one of the top issues for older people as one of the biggest barrier to inclusion and active participation in the community, affecting access to employment, learning, and all aspects of life.

People within the Sirhowy valley (23, 8%) were more likely to say that public transport needed to be improved than other valley areas.

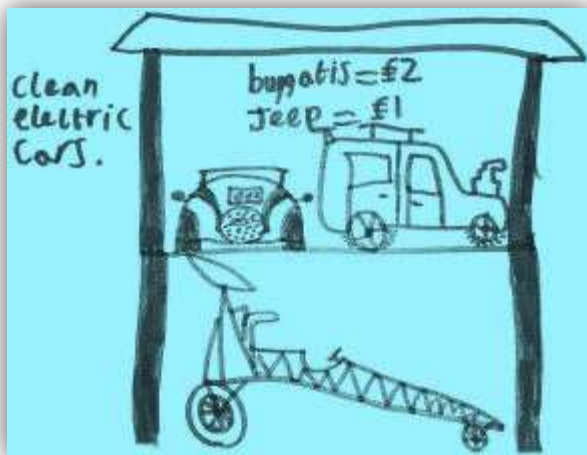
Some popular comments:

"Better bus links to Merthyr, Newport and Cwmbran"

"Better regular bus service"

"Roads in poor state / potholes"

Selection of relevant images from 'Blaenau Gwent We Want' process



5. What is currently being done to tackle this issue?

5.1 Is this issue currently being tackled in partnership?

Whilst not contained within the SIP, at a National level wider partnership working in relation to tackling these issues is being undertaken via implementation of Welsh Government's 'Wales Transport Strategy' which looks to be delivered in partnership by Welsh Government, Regional Transport Consortia and transport operators.

The following list highlights some of the existing Transport Links and Connectivity assets within the Blaenau Gwent area:

- Regional rail development project (Ebbw Vale Valley Line development)
- Heads of the Valleys A465 Dualling
- Walking Trails - Ebbw Fach; Iron Makers; Nye Bevan; Tyleri

5.2 What wider assets could assist in tackling this issue?

Wider assets that could be used to tackle the issue will be explored through further response analysis work dependant on priority setting of the PSB, which would look to build on the aforementioned wider partnership opportunities.

6. What this tells us about Well-being in Blaenau Gwent

- More synergy required between existing public transport services (for example, buses and trains);
- Need for better integration of public transport services with places of employment and work times;
- More community transport schemes to support those most vulnerable (including older people);
- Better interconnectivity with areas outside of Blaenau Gwent (for example, Cardiff and London);
- Improvements in interchange facilities;
- Need for more opportunities for walking and cycling.

Section 5.10: Social Care and Support

1. Overview

A range of work has been undertaken to explore the future care and support needs of the local population – both children and adults - and how services can be delivered in a way that maximises people's well-being. There is no doubt that this will be challenging within a financially restrictive environment and with an ageing population.

As highlighted in other sections, this underlines the importance of [promoting healthy lifestyles](#), supporting [emotional health](#), giving [children the best start](#) and enabling people to '[age well](#)', in addition to building an [accessible environment](#) and [cohesive communities](#).

To support this section, the Population Needs Assessment which has been produced under the Social Services and Well-being Act (2014) has been considered as a regional population needs assessment (PNA) in relation to people requiring care and support. This is specifically described in this section, under '[What research exists to help us develop a response to this/these issues?](#)'.

2. What is the data saying?

2.1 At a Blaenau Gwent level

As part of the requirements of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, all local authority social services departments are required to monitor a number of statutory performance indicators. These indicators are collected locally on a monthly or quarterly basis and are collated by the Welsh Government annually. Some of these indicators support this chapter of the well-being assessment on Social Care and Support. These indicators have been highlighted below. It is however, evident that supporting data from partner organisations is not as readily available.

Children

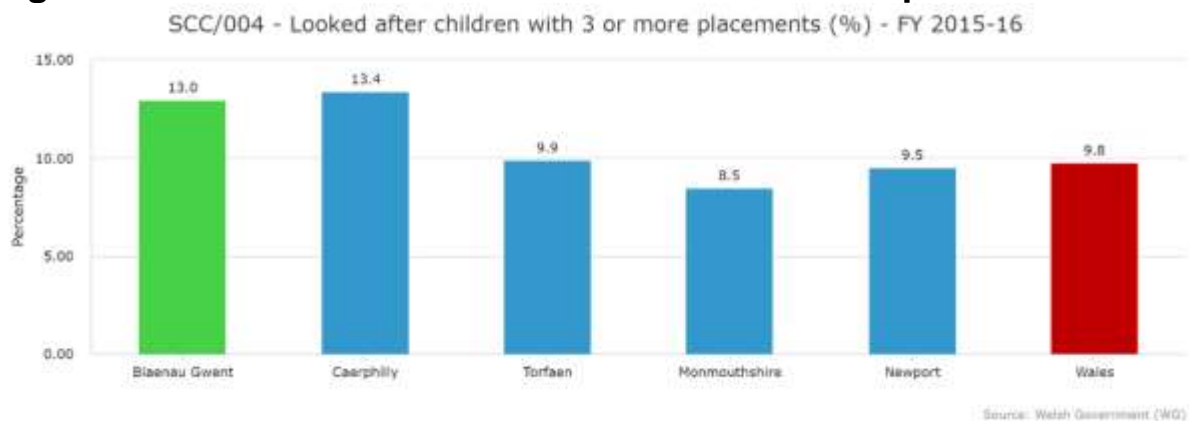
In relation to 'Children in Need'⁶ (CiN) there were 19,385 at 31 March 2015, equating to 308 per 10,000 children aged under 18 years. This is high compared to the Welsh average - at Local Authority level, the rate varied from 156 children in need per 10,000 in Flintshire to 480 in Blaenau Gwent.

One of the national well-being indicators linked to CiN relates to Looked After Children (LAC) with 3 or more placements. Figure SC01 shows that in Blaenau Gwent 13.0% of LAC have had 3 or more placements in 2015/16, which is above the Wales average.

⁶ Children in need are defined in law as children who are aged under 18 and:-

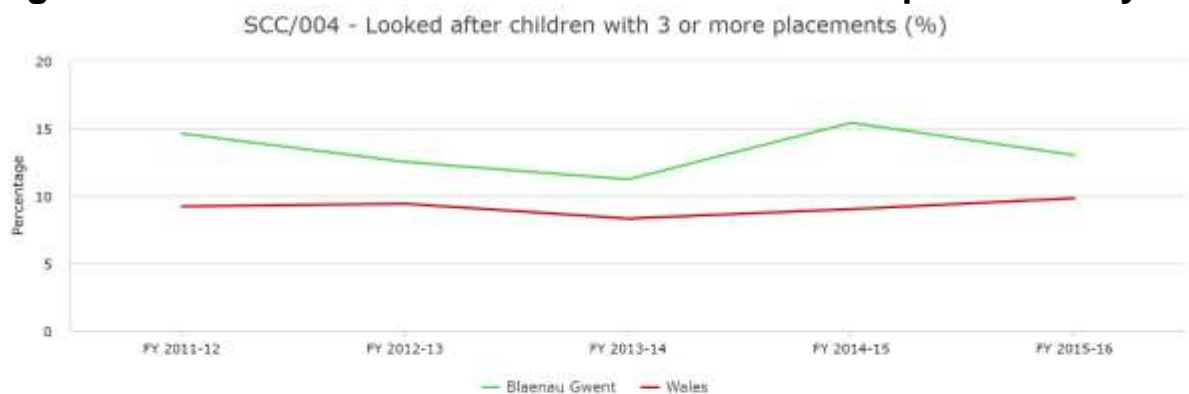
- need local authority services to achieve or maintain a reasonable standard of health or development
- need local authority services to prevent significant or further harm to health or development are disabled.

Figure SC01: Looked After Children with 3 or more placement



Whilst this placement figure is high relative to other local authorities and Wales overall, Figure SC02 shows that in Blaenau Gwent over the period 2011-12 to 2015-16, the percentage has decreased by 1.6%. This compares with an increase of 0.6% over the same period for Wales.

Figure SC02: Looked After Children with 3 or more placement by time

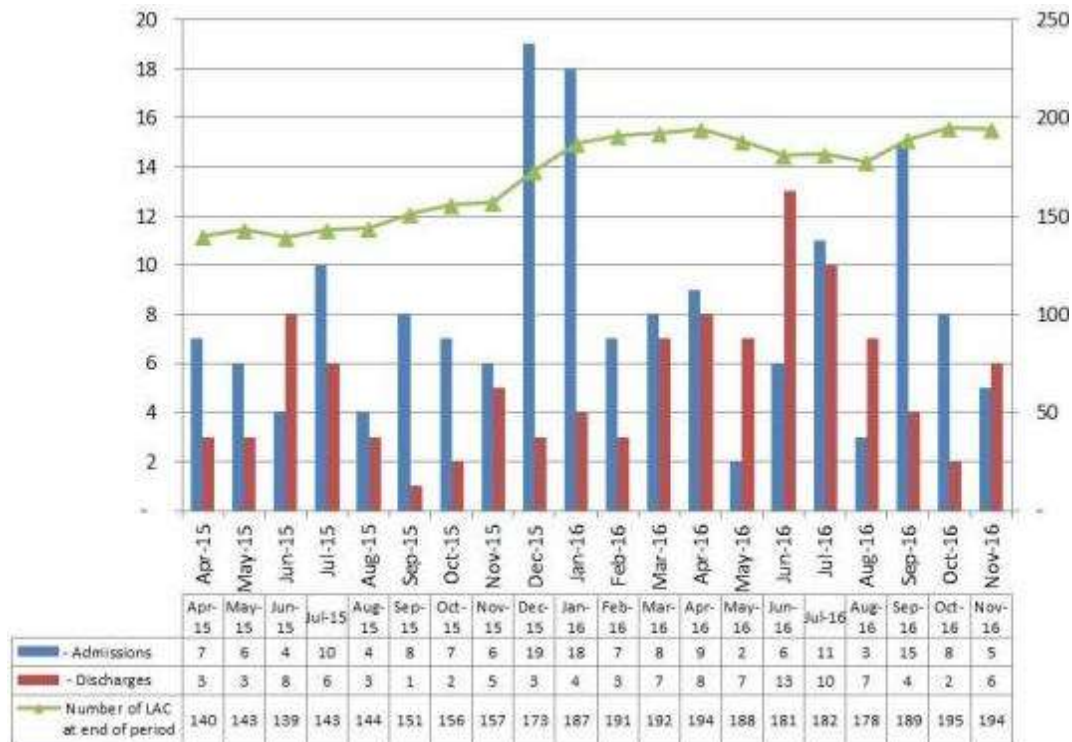


	Blaenau Gwent	Wales
FY 2011-12	14.6	9.2
FY 2012-13	12.5	9.4
FY 2013-14	11.2	8.3
FY 2014-15	15.4	9.0
FY 2015-16	13.0	9.8

Prior to the end of 2015 the numbers of LAC within Blaenau Gwent had remained stable since 2008 (at a rate of between 135-145 within any 12 month period). However, the end of 2015 saw a dramatic increase in the numbers of LAC received into foster care, and also a significant increase in

the numbers of children who were placed in residential care due to their complex needs.

Figure SC03: Intake of LAC in Blaenau Gwent by time



Source: Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

Finally, a range of indicators related to children's health are included in other sections for example, [Baby and Children's Health and Development](#).

Adults

A key indicator for adults relating to care and support concerns is delayed transfers of care. Figure SC04 below shows the number of delayed transfers of care for all reasons in September 2016 across the Gwent region, which shows as of October 2016, Blaenau Gwent has low numbers of delayed transfers of care compared to other local authority areas in Wales.

Figure SC04: Delayed Transfer of Care by Area

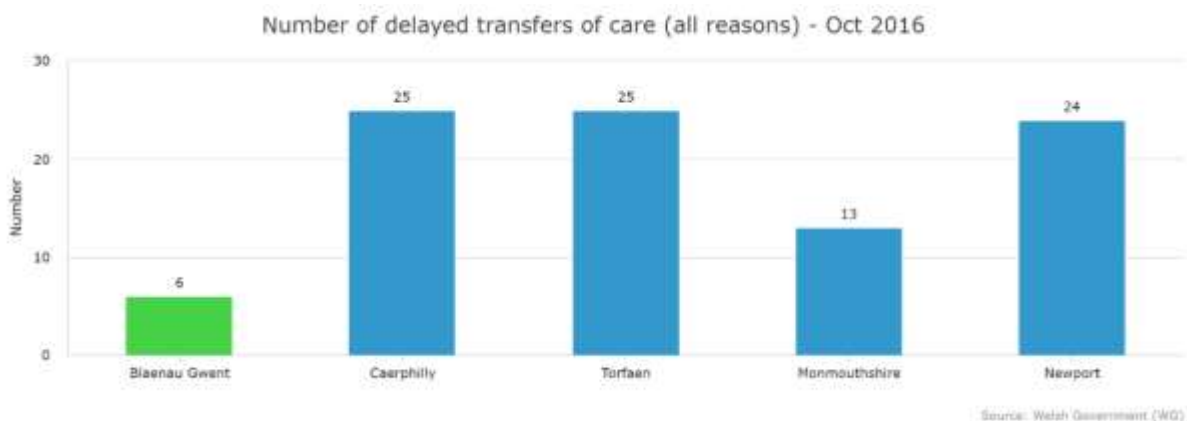


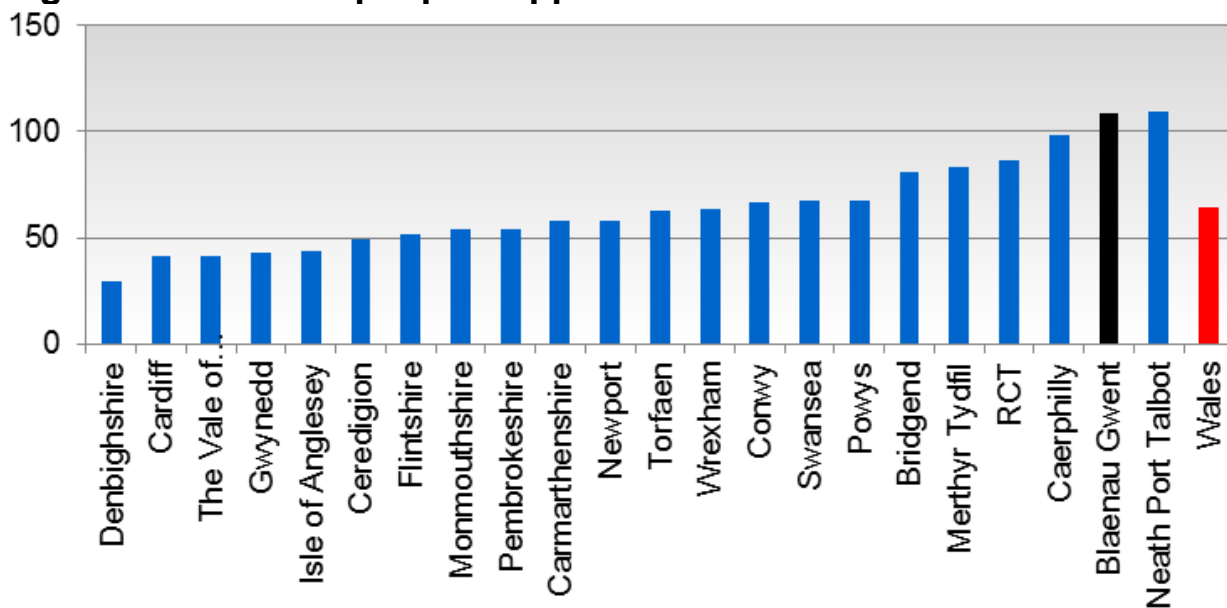
Figure SC05 shows that although there has been some fluctuation in delayed transfers of care numbers for all reasons in Blaenau Gwent over the period April 2015 to September 2016, the number remains relatively low.

Figure SC05: The rate of delayed transfers of care for social care reasons per 1,000 population aged 75 or over –



In terms of the rate of older people supported in care homes, Blaenau Gwent has the second highest rate of older people whom the authority supports in care homes per 1,000 population aged 65 or over at 31 March 2016 (Figure SC06).

Figure SC06: Older people supported in care homes



Source: Welsh Government

Furthermore, a range of indicators related to Adult's health are included in other sections (for example, Life Expectancy, Emotional Health, Healthy Lifestyles, Ageing Well).

2.2 At a neighbourhood area level

Neighbourhood level data has not been sought for this measure but could be explored if this is identified as a priority by the PSB on 24 April 2017 to inform any response analysis.

2.3 Interpretation of data

Children

Blaenau Gwent has a high number of CiN) compared to other areas in Wales. This figure is impacted owing to a large increase in the number of Looked After Children (LAC) seen in the area over the past year. Contributory factors to this include:

- An increase in the number of child protection referrals

- An increase in number of applications made to the court to remove children from their families compared to the previous year
- A court judgement stating, in situations where there are safeguarding concerns and children are placed with extended family members they should become LAC

The All Wales Heads of Children's Services commissioned Cordis Bright to undertake research into the differences in the LAC population across Wales in 2013. The research identified 5 areas that can help reduce the numbers of LAC. These were:

- Strategy and Leadership
- Prevention and Early Intervention
- Approach to practice
- Partnership working
- Information and intelligence about performance

Across Wales, there has also been an increase in LAC over the past year. One measure of stability to support the well-being of LAC is the number of placements they have had within a year. The more placements had the worst impact on well-being for the child. Although Blaenau Gwent has seen improvement compared to previous years, it is still ranked in the lowest quartile across Wales. A similar picture is also seen in the number of LAC experiencing more than one change of school.

Adults

There has been some fluctuation in the numbers of delayed transfers of care in Blaenau Gwent over the period April 2015 to September 2016, but the number remains relatively low.

2.4 What are the critical issues for public services to consider?

Children

A regional **Children & Families Partnership Board (CFPB)** has been established with representation from across health, social care and education. There is no set definition for children with complex needs at a regional level, but as a starting point the CFPB considers the following client groups to have complex needs: people with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and/or a learning disability; children with complex physical disabilities and; children and young people who have experienced developmental trauma and people who can present challenging behaviour. The CFPB have identified the following priorities:

- Emotional Well-being and Mental Ill-Health across the age range, including loneliness in older people ,children and young people, maternal and infant mental ill-health with the view to identify any gaps in current support provision and to develop new services and/or transform current services;
- Multi-agency assessment and planning for children and young people with complex needs – with the view to improve joint referrals, joint assessment and joint commissioning of services for this group;
- Out of county placements for children and young people with complex needs - with the view to plan and develop local services where appropriate (including possible residential provision)
- Obesity in children and young people (this will be linked to local Well-being Plans and the work of Public Service Boards)

Flying Start and ***Families First*** are preventative programmes which aim to give children the best start in life, reduce the escalation of needs and support

families to ensure a child's well-being. Over the last few years Flying Start has been expanded across Blaenau Gwent to meet levels of need.

Further priorities identified by Blaenau Gwent Council which align to the CFPB, and will need to be delivered in partnership includes:

Social Services Priorities for 2017/18:

- To fully implement the Social Services and Wellbeing Act 2014;
- To safely reduce the numbers of looked after children;
- To continue to safeguard the vulnerable children and adults of Blaenau Gwent;
- To continue to explore and develop collaborative opportunities with our statutory and non-statutory partners;
- To deliver quality services to the citizens, children and families of Blaenau Gwent whilst maintaining a balanced budget.

Children's Services Priorities 2017/18:

- All Teams to contribute to improve outcomes for looked after children
- All Teams to contribute to the safe reduction in the numbers of LAC
- Ensure [Families First, Flying Start](#), Early Years and Play targets the most vulnerable families in Blaenau Gwent who do not meet the criteria for a care and support plan under the Social Services and Well-being Act 2014
- All teams to ensure the children and young people of Blaenau Gwent are safeguarded
- Manage the Children's Services Budget to ensure expenditure come within budget

Adults

A key aim of Blaenau Gwent's local ***Living Independently Strategy*** is to enable older people to remain in their own homes for as long as possible, with an over-arching principle that actions should be taken to *"help older people to find solutions that work for them"* enabling independence and promoting quality of life. Gwent's ***Frailty Strategy*** and the new ***Dementia Strategy*** are key to delivering this.

Support to carers is also a priority as more people are taking on caring responsibilities for family or friends; there are a range of support and information services plus a regional Carers Board and partnership based *Carers Information and Consultation Strategy 2012-2015* developed by ABUHB.

Building care and support fit for the future

It is recognised that there is a lot more to do to ensure effective care and support for the local population, in line with the aims of related national legislation, including the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. Structural change is required to integrate health and social care services and a number of projects are underway to deliver this, for example through ***'Care Closer to Home'*** Aneurin Bevan University Health Board has been working in partnership with Gwent local authorities to look at opportunities to align and integrate services around GP cluster areas.

Further priorities identified by Blaenau Gwent Council which align to the aforementioned strategies, which will need to be delivered in partnership includes:

Adult Services Priorities 2017/18:

- All Adult Services Teams contribute to improve outcomes for vulnerable adults (and their carers) living in Blaenau Gwent

- All Adult Services teams and our partner agencies ensure that vulnerable adults of Blaenau Gwent are safeguarded
- Ensure that our IAA / preventative services and community based opportunities support the most vulnerable citizens in Blaenau Gwent who do not meet the criteria for a care and support plan under the Social Services and Wellbeing Act 2014
- Progressing Alternative Methods of Service Delivery across both Health and Social Care through integrated / outcomes based commissioning models to meet personal outcomes and support personal wellbeing
- Manage the Adult Services Budget to ensure expenditure comes within budget

3. What research exists to help us develop a response to this/ these issues?

In late 2016 a [Population Needs Assessment](#) (PNA) was undertaken to present not only the level of need across the region, but also to provide the region's response to identified need, as well as proposing the next steps required to meet those needs. The PNA looks to promote well-being, support people at the earliest opportunity to maintain independence, and to help people to better help themselves. The priorities identified by Health and Social Services will identify how they will work in partnership to deliver and also to ensure services are sustainable now and in the future. Each local authority and Health Board are required to prepare and publish a plan setting out the range and level of services they propose to provide, or arrange to be provided, in response to the PNA. Area plans must include the specific services planned in response to each core theme identified in the PNA.

Greater Gwent Population Needs Assessment – what it is

Greater Gwent Health, Social Care and Well-being Partnership have been working to develop a Population Needs Assessment (PNA) for people who use care and support services, using a toolkit developed by the Welsh Local Government Association and Social Services Improvement Agency. The assessment has drawn on a range of data to consider current and future needs. This will be followed by a Regional Area Plan (required by April 2018), which will set out how specific care and support services will be provided and delivered. People who use services and carers have been engaged in a number of ways to inform the assessment, through a citizen's panel, workshops and engagement activity in each local authority area.

Emerging Priorities: Social Services and Well-being Act Population Needs Assessment for Gwent

Core Theme	Emerging Areas of Interest
Children and Young People	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accommodation and local placements for children with complex needs• Transition arrangements between children and adult services and simpler processes for children with complex needs• Earlier intervention and community based support linked to school hubs• Looked After Children including education achievement• Mental health support for children
Older People	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Isolation of older people• Dementia• Simpler coordination of services including Continuing Health Care• Appropriate accommodation for older people• Person centered support where person is listened to, with earlier intervention and community resilience

Carers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young Carers and support for siblings • Flexible, bespoke support including Information, Advice and Assistance • Flexible respite for carers • Training and peer to peer support for carers • New models of support for carers
Mental Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased understanding and awareness of mental health • Emotional support for children in care • Less social isolation more community support • Early intervention and community support which is timely including advocacy.
Learning Disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent living with access to early intervention services in the community and good public awareness (including Carer's education – what is acceptable?) • Young people with autism, accommodation, access to day services • Employment and training opportunities for people with learning disabilities • Dementia amongst people with learning disabilities • Appropriate Accommodation
Physical Health and Sensory Impairment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support people with physical and sensory needs with independent living • All age approach to physical disabilities • Accessible transport, accommodation and community based services • Access to medication where required
Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training for all • Healthy relationship awareness especially in schools • Family services • Support for victims • Service analysis and mapping

4. Five ways of working

4.1 Collaboration

<i>Adds no value</i>	<i>Adds some value</i>	<i>Adds moderate value</i>	<i>Critical to tackle the issue</i>
			X

Collaboration will be critical to tackle the issues and priorities identified within this section. For example, key aspect of the Social Services and Well-being Act can only be delivered jointly between Local Authorities and Health Boards and wider partners.

Examples of collaborations already in place to tackle some of the identified issues includes:

- South East Wales Adoption Service
- South East Wales Adult Placement Scheme
- Gwent Frailty Programme
- Gwent Integrated Family Support Service
- South East Wales Safeguarding Children Board (SEWSCB)
- Gwent Wide Adult Safeguarding Board
- Gwent Mental Health & Learning Disabilities Partnership Team
- Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DOLs) Mental Capacity Act 2005
- National Youth Advocacy Services NYAS
- Greater Gwent Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Partnership
- Gwent Regional Collaborative (RCC) – Supporting People
- Regional Supporting People Co-ordinators post

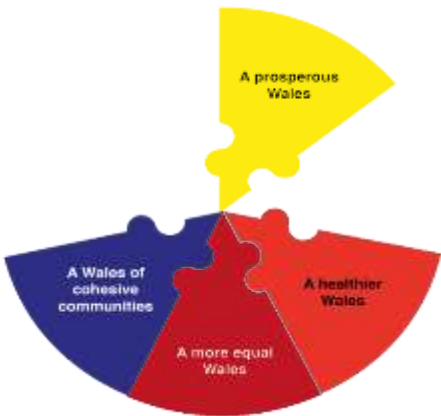
4.2 a) Integration – links with themes

<i>Economic</i>	<i>Social</i>	<i>Environmental</i>	<i>Cultural</i>
x	x		

Economic – working with LAC to support their Education (results, exclusions and attendance) and maximising their economic opportunities through employment pathways

Social – working with families, children, adults and older people to help them to participate in society, promote independence and reduce dependency, including the promotion of health (healthy lifestyle and living)

4.2b) Integration –Contribution to the National Goal



Supporting Commentary

4.3 Thinking to the Long Term

Short term (1-2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Reduction in escalating concerns / provider performance alerts</i>• <i>Increased opportunities to signpost / support vulnerable adults</i>• <i>Increased opportunities to reduce /minimise safeguarding risks</i>• <i>Reduction in the numbers of referrals into long term social care services</i>• <i>Reduction in the numbers of Vulnerable Adults with Care and Support plans</i>
Medium term (2-5 years)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Increased capacity to meet care and support needs within the IAA service as part of proportionate assessments and signposting</i>• <i>More seamless service delivery and where appropriate full integration between Health and Social Services</i>
Long term (10 years plus)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>New models of service delivery in operation</i>• <i>Continued reduction in the numbers of vulnerable adults living in Care Homes</i>• <i>Increase the opportunities to develop sustainable services using both internal and external grant opportunities</i>

4.4 Prevention

Maximising the well-being of children and adults will require preventative action. Different types of preventative action will be needed to address the different types of issues identified. For example, prevention approaches which help mitigate children and adults from requiring care and support. As well as preventative approaches which look to improve the well-being of adults and children already in receipt of social care and support.

Types of preventative activities may include promoting healthy lifestyles, supporting emotional health, giving children the best start in life and enabling people to 'age well'.

In relation to LAC and CiN the early identification of families will be critical to ensuring that those in need of social care and support receive a comprehensive partnership approach which looks to take preventative action in order to reduce the impact of adverse early life experiences.

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) is a term used to describe a wide range of traumatic events that children can be exposed to while growing up but are remembered throughout childhood. These may include neglect and physical, verbal and sexual abuse along with harms that affect the environment in which the child lives such as exposure to domestic violence, family breakdown, and living in a home affected by substance abuse, mental illness or criminal behaviour.

There is growing recognition that early intervention and collaborative working are essential to reducing the impact of ACEs.

4.5 Involvement

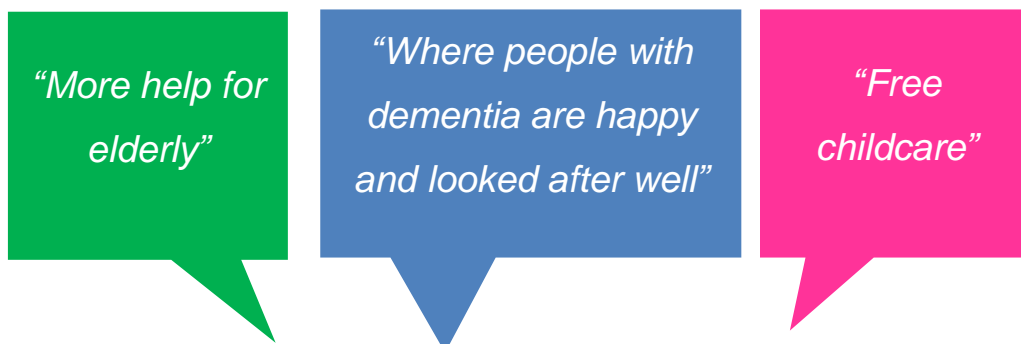
During the 'Blaenau Gwent We Want' Public Engagement Programme our theme 'social care' was 16th most popular overall with 50 comments (1%). It was 15th most popular (46, 2%) when we asked what would make Blaenau Gwent a better place?

As a topic, social care was 27th most popular with 42 comments (1%). However our related topic 'family and friends' was 20th most popular with 72 comments (2%). Family and Friends was also the 3rd most popular topic when we asked what things are important to people to live well and enjoy their lives (40 comments, 10%) showing how important the support of family and friends are to our residents.

There was a wide range of issues emerging from our social care topic including support for people with dementia, childcare and support for people with disabilities. Many of the comments related to social care were aimed at services for older people.

People within the Upper Ebbw Fach valley (19 comments, 3%) were more likely to comment about social care than the other 3 valley areas.

Some popular comments:



Selection of relevant images from 'Blaenau Gwent We Want' process

'LACK OF SOCIAL
CARE'
NO COHESION

FAIRER CARE
SERVICES
FOR PEOPLE WITH
PHYSICAL & MENTAL
DISABILITY



BERT DENNING
CENTRE IS A REAL
LOCAL ASSET FOR PEOPLE
WITH DISABILITIES

Engagement through Population Needs Assessment

Further to the 'Blaenau Gwent We Want' engagement programme, as part of the Social Services and Well-being Act 2014 Blaenau Gwent Council are required to undertake an annual qualitative survey with people who use their social care services. The questions must be asked to people who have a care and support plan, or support plan, and are receiving services from the local authority. Results of which are as follows:

Children's Services

330 questionnaires were sent out to children with 57 returned with a response rate of 17%. *This is below the required response rate. To enable a reliable statistical comparison a suggested response rate of 55% was required, this equates to 180 returned questionnaires.*

Of the responses 90% of secondary school aged children said they live in a home where they are happy; are happy with family, friends and neighbours; and feel cared for and safe. Whilst two thirds felt their views about care and support were listened to. 68% felt that they can do the things they like to do.

Of the responses received from primary aged children 100% are happy with the people around them with 94% responding that they feel cared for and safe. 75% reported that their views about care and support were listened to.

595 questionnaires were sent out to parents to gather views in relation to one question. There was a low response rate with only 32 respondents returning their questionnaire. This equates to a response rate of 5%. Again this response would be deemed to be too low for statistical reliability.

Of the responses 59% of parents reported that they have been actively involved in all decisions about how my child's /children's care and support was provided with 25% reporting 'sometimes' and 16% reporting 'no'.

Adult Services

780 questionnaires were sent out to Adults aged 18 or over with 302 responses received. *This equates to a 39% response rate, this is higher than the local authority has received from previous surveys, including the pilot undertaken in March 2016. This also exceeded the required Welsh Government response rate of 25% equating to 264 questionnaires.*

87% of respondents reported that they lived in a home that supported their wellbeing and 86% report being happy with support from family, friends and neighbours. Whilst 43% reported that they can do the things that are important to them, and 47% feel part of their community.

Questionnaires were sent to 7 carers who had a joint care and support plan with the cared for person, the guidance specifies that questionnaires are sent out to carers with a support plan in place. Of the 7 sent out 4 responses were received, the low response deemed the results to be statistically unreliable.

5. What is currently being done to tackle this issue?

5.1 Is this issue currently being tackled in partnership?

Children

The critical issues highlighted at 2.4 are currently being explored by the Learning group and Healthy group within the single integrated plan overseen by the PSB. This work includes the following areas:

- Supporting vulnerable learners to improve their emotional well-being
- Improving intervention methods to support reducing child obesity rates and improving healthy eating opportunities for communities

Adults

Whilst not contained within the SIP, wider partnership working in tackling these issues is being overseen by the 50+ Stakeholder Partnership, and Blaenau Gwent's Strategy for Older People which is governed by the Public Services Board. This work includes:

- Blaenau Gwent's Dementia Strategy
- Ensuring older people have good access to information , advice and support services across Blaenau Gwent

5.2 What wider assets could assist in tackling this issue?

Wider assets that could be used to tackle these issues include the regional Children & Families Partnership Board (CFPB), however additional assets linked to adults services could be explored through further response analysis work dependant on the priority setting of the PSB.

6. What this tells us about Well-being in Blaenau Gwent

What this section tells us about well-being in Blaenau Gwent is that there are a high proportion of children and families who require social care and support services. This is evidenced by Blaenau Gwent having about the Wales average number of Children in Need (CiN).

Furthermore, the evidence suggests that potentially this issue is becoming more significant as during the end of 2015 there was a dramatic increase in the number of Looked After Children (LAC) received into foster care, and also a significant increase in the number of children who were placed in residential care due to their complex needs.

Therefore, in order to improve the well-being of families and children steps to support a reduction in the numbers of LAC and CiN is critical.

The section also tells us that compared to other local authority areas across Wales, Blaenau Gwent has the second highest rate of older people (aged 65 or over) whom the authority supports in care homes per 1,000 population aged 65 or over at 31 March 2017. Therefore, steps to lower these figures and increase dependency levels and support older people to be able to 'age well' will be key to promoting and improving adults well-being.



6. Cultural Well-being

Cultural Well-Being

This well-being chapter focuses on cultural well-being. It has been developed collaboratively by partner organisations represented on the Blaenau Gwent Public Service Board.

Cultural well-being is identified as one of the four key sustainable development pillars for improvement by the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

Cultural well-being can be defined as the vitality of the communities and people that live within our area. Key examples of what contributes to cultural well-being include participation and inclusion in recreation, creative and cultural activities, and the opportunity to recognise and celebrate our areas arts, history, heritage and diversity.

Under the principles of sustainable development cultural well-being should not be seen in isolation focusing on the needs of only those in the present, and it should be preserved for future generations. Preserving and growing our culture will need to take appropriate and measured consideration of economic prosperity, the impact of today's society, and the environmental viability of an area now and for future generations.

For this well-being assessment for Blaenau Gwent the following sections or 'measures' are considered:

- [Welsh Language](#)
- [Cultural Identity and Cohesion](#)
- [Sports, recreation, arts, culture and heritage](#)
- [Tourism](#)
- [Current and Future Technologies](#)

Section 6.1: Welsh Language

1. Overview

The Welsh Language is one of the world's oldest languages and is considered a robust minority language in Europe. The Welsh language was once spoken widely across Wales, and recorded history shows the language was widely spoken as the only language in the Blaenau Gwent area until the early 1800s.

The advent of the industrial revolution, and the mass of immigration into the area to work in heavy industry saw a significant change in the native tongue of the local population, and as a consequence fewer and fewer people regularly spoke Welsh. The consequence of this was by 1991 only just over 2% of the Blaenau Gwent population highlighted they could speak Welsh.

Today, the Welsh Government is committed to preserving and promoting the Welsh Language with recent legislation noting their commitment. The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 specifically identifies the Welsh Language as a national goal outlined as:

“A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language”

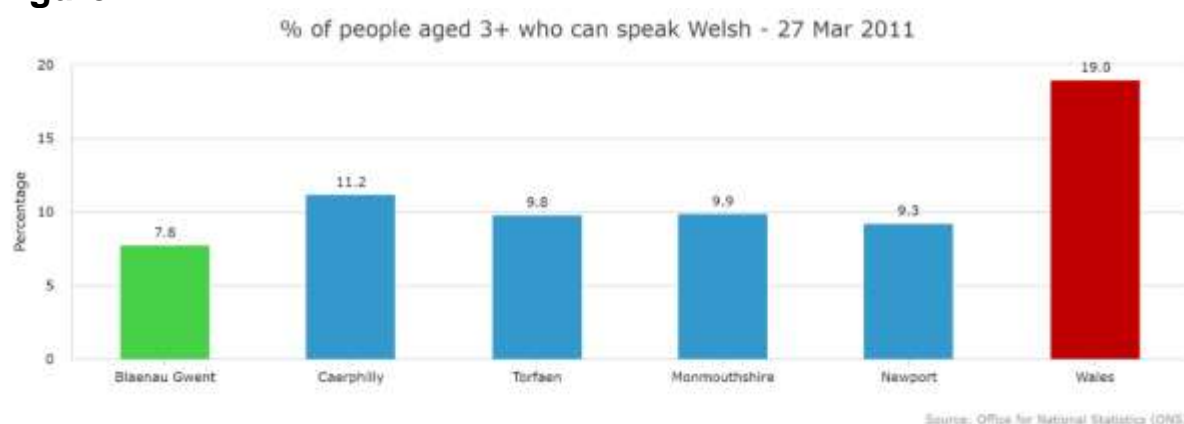
To support this Welsh Government is working on a proposal for growing the number of Welsh Speakers to one million by 2050.

2. What is the data saying?

2.1 At a Blaenau Gwent level

Figure WL1 shows that the percentage of people aged 3 years and over who could speak Welsh at the time of the last Census (2011) in the Gwent region was 9.9%, compared to 19.0% for Wales. Blaenau Gwent had the lowest percentage of its population aged 3 years and over who could speak Welsh at 7.8% across the Gwent region. This means that only around 5,000 people in the area can speak Welsh.

Figure WL1



As well as having low levels of Welsh speakers, information suggests that those that do consider themselves to be able to speak Welsh still do not use the language on a regular basis. The Annual Population Survey shows that in Blaenau Gwent only 2% of people aged 16 years or over who speak Welsh daily, compared to 10% for Wales overall.

2.2 At a neighbourhood area level

In Blaenau Gwent, there was a small decrease of people aged 3 years and over who could speak Welsh between the 2001 Census and the 2011 Census 1.7%. This pattern was witnessed across Wales overall.

However, the people who can speak Welsh have risen significantly from 1991 when just 2.2% of the population or around 1,500 of people were Welsh speaking.

The rise in number of people who speak Welsh between 1991 and 2011 can be directly correlated to the change in national education policy in Wales where teaching of Welsh language to Key Stage 4 was made compulsory in all English medium schooling in Wales from 1999.

As a consequence, it is not surprising that children and young people account for the highest number of Welsh speakers in Blaenau Gwent, a pattern which is mirrored across Wales overall.

The Census 2011 shows that although there are higher levels of Welsh language ability in those aged 0-15 (31% are able to speak Welsh), only 5% of people aged 16 to 64 years are able to speak Welsh and 1% of people 65 and over are able to speak Welsh.

Consideration of Welsh language speakers by neighbourhood areas show that Blaenau Gwent does not have any distinctive pockets of Welsh language speakers, with levels being generally consistent across the area.

When considering by small geographical areas (MSOAs), the highest number of Welsh Language speakers was Nantyglo and Blaina (8.6%), and the area with the lowest number of Welsh Language speakers was Central Ebbw Vale (7%).

2.3 Interpretation of data

The Welsh language is not spoken by the majority of people that live in Blaenau Gwent, and even those that are Welsh language speakers (or have Welsh language ability) have low levels of fluency.

However, in terms of Well-being considerations our challenge for our area will be what can be done collectively in Blaenau Gwent to more effectively work

together to promote the Welsh language, and give those in the area that want to use the Welsh language the opportunities to do so.

This will be particularly pertinent if the area is to effectively participate to contribute towards the ambitious target being considered for Wales by Welsh Government to have one million Welsh speakers in Wales by 2050.

2.4 What are the critical issues for public services to consider?

The critical issues for public services to consider are as follows:

- Blaenau Gwent consistently has the lowest use of Welsh Language in Wales, along with other areas in South East Wales with similar levels.
- Partnership working will be crucial to create the right conditions in which bilingualism can flourish and thrive.
- No public service can achieve the necessary increases in Welsh language use by itself, and wider engagement and participation of the residents of Blaenau Gwent will be important.

3. What research exists to help us develop a response to this/ these issues?

The **Welsh Language Use in Wales 2013-15** report carried out on behalf of the Welsh Language Commissioner and Welsh Government. This study shows estimates that Blaenau Gwent only has 900 fluent Welsh speakers, similar to levels witnessed when a similar study was carried out in 2004-06. The remaining speakers (estimated to be around 5600 people are not fluent Welsh speakers).

The **Local Authority Service User Survey 2015** commissioned by the Welsh Language Commissioner was based on a telephone survey with 1,009 Welsh speakers in each of the 22 local authorities in Wales, however figures were not reported at a Blaenau Gwent level but summarised at South and Mid Wales level.

The overall aim of the survey was to ‘to understand fluent Welsh speakers’ aspirations, expectations and experiences with regard to Welsh language services provided by local authorities in Wales’. More specifically, the objectives were to ascertain:

- The aspirations of Welsh speakers for the provision of local authorities’ first point of contact services.
- The expectations of users of the provision of local authorities’ first point of contact services.
- Welsh speakers’ priorities for the short, middle and long term in terms of first point of contact services.
- Personal experiences of the contact had with the local authority.
- The main areas of improvement for local authorities.

During the **Blaenau Gwent We Want** Engagement exercise, the partnership undertook and attended numerous engagement activities and events throughout the borough to gather people's views.

Residents also took part via the Blaenau Gwent We Want Facebook page and partnership websites. Links to an online questionnaire were also distributed to many residents known to the partnership, such as members of the Blaenau Gwent Citizen Panel.

Residents were encouraged via the methods above to answer a range of questions that sought to capture:

- Citizen values, aspirations and priorities;
- Citizen needs – insight into the needs they and their communities encounter within daily life and what the best solutions may be and
- Citizen assets –what people can and already contribute themselves such as self-care, citizen and community action and volunteering.

Q1. What do you think is special about BG?

Q2. What things are important to you to live well and enjoy life?

Q3. What would make BG a better place?

Q4. What can you do to help make BG a better place?

Approximately 1,000 residents were engaged with (across all groups) during the engagement phase.

No information from the 'Blaenau Gwent We Want' was received in Welsh. However, the Welsh language was mentioned specifically by nine participants. The majority of these responses (8) highlighted a requirement for more provision of services and training opportunities to make the area a better place. The remaining comment highlighted that they felt there should be less Welsh language provision.

4. Five ways of working

4.1 Collaboration

No public service or service provider can achieve the necessary increases in Welsh language use by itself, and effective delivery requires the concerted joined-up effort of all partners and the engagement and participation of the residents of Blaenau Gwent.

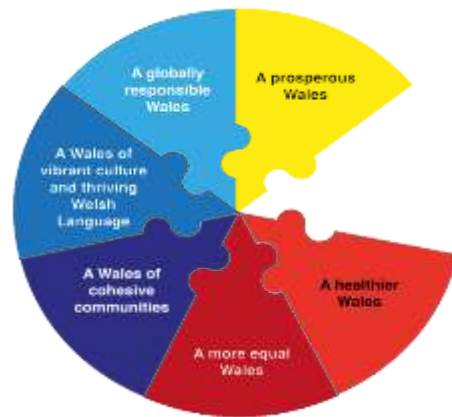
<i>Adds no value</i>	<i>Adds some value</i>	<i>Adds moderate value</i>	<i>Critical to tackle the issue</i>
			X

4.2 a) Integration – links with themes

Improving the promotion and facilitation of the Welsh language is in line with Welsh Government's Wellbeing and Future Generations Act 2015, goal to provide 'A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language' and also directly links with 'A More Equal Wales,' 'A Healthier Wales', 'A Wales of Cohesive Communities.' Moreover, with the requirements of the legal and policy frameworks for public services such as the Welsh Language Standards, More Than Words etc. there are distinct threads that run through each of the 4 themes.

<i>Economic</i>	<i>Social</i>	<i>Environmental</i>	<i>Cultural</i>
X	X	X	X

4.2b) Integration –Contribution to the National Goals



Supporting Commentary

Prosperous: The National Welsh Promotion strategy is intrinsically linked to the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan for the Blaenau Gwent area.

Healthier: The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 sets out overarching duties to help people who need care and support and carers who need support. Having regard to the characteristics, culture and beliefs of an individual is paramount in supporting people to achieve well-being. For many Welsh speakers, language is an integral element of achieving their care. The Act's definition of well-being includes 'securing rights and entitlements'. For Welsh speakers, securing rights and entitlements will mean being able to use their own language to communicate and participate in their care as equal partners.

Equal: Welsh Speakers have rights and entitlements and therefore public services are required to engage with residents and provide access to its Services in the language of choice (i.e. English, Welsh, Bilingual English/Welsh).

Cohesive: Welsh and English language are key components in our history, culture and social fabric. As public services we have a duty to promote and facilitate the use of the Welsh Language.

Culture/Language: Welsh and English language are key components in our history, culture and social fabric. Promotion and facilitation of the use of Welsh Language will help our Welsh language speakers to thrive in our communities.

Global Responsibility: Promotion and protection of Blaenau Gwent's Welsh Language will demonstrate a global responsibility for protecting and supporting the world's oldest language. A language which is spoken by communities outside of Wales (for example, Patagonia, Argentina).

4.3 Thinking to the Long Term

Consider the known / likely / potential impact on well-being in the short, medium and long term.

Short term (1-2)	<i>Access to services in the language of choice</i>
Medium term (2-5 years)	
Long term (10 years plus)	<i>A million Welsh Speakers in Wales by 2050</i>

4.4 Prevention

Commitment to contributing to Welsh Government's vision of a million Welsh speakers will ensure a preventative approach is taken to preserve Welsh culture and the Welsh language.

4.5 Involvement

During the 'Blaenau Gwent We Want' Public Engagement Programme the Welsh Language was not a very popular topic amongst those who took part with just 15 comments (less than 1%) being categorised into this theme.

The majority of comments were about the requirement for more provision of services and training opportunities in the Welsh Language. One comment stated that there should be less Welsh Language provision.

Examples of comments we received:



*"A proper welsh
community"*

5. What is currently being done to tackle this issue?

5.1 Is this issue currently being tackled in partnership?

The Local Authority and other Public Sector providers in Wales are required to comply with the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, which introduce a number of Welsh Language Standards. The requirements of each of these Standards are set out in a Compliance Notice. Compliance is enforced by the Welsh Language Commissioner.

Blaenau Gwent Council has recently published its first Welsh Language Promotion Strategy 2017-2022. The Strategy sets out the Council's commitment to work in partnership to promote and facilitate the use of the Welsh language, and make a valued contribution to the Wales vision of a million Welsh speakers. There are three objectives in the Strategy:

1. To promote and encourage the use of the Welsh language within families and the community.
2. To increase the provision of Welsh language education and informal activities for children and young people and to increase their awareness of the value of the language.
3. To increase opportunities for people to use Welsh in the workplace.

5.2 What wider assets could assist in tackling this issue?

Public Services cannot achieve a sustainable increase in the number of Welsh speakers in Blaenau Gwent on their own. Partnership working and close collaboration are critical elements. Key partners would include, but is not limited to the following: Welsh Government, Welsh Language Commissioner, Local Authorities, Health Boards, Educational Institutions (Welsh and English Medium), Aneurin Leisure Trust, Menter Iaith, Coleg Gwent, Urdd Gobaith Cymru, Blaenau Gwent citizens, Adult Learners, Welsh Language Society etc.

6. What this tells us about Well-being in Blaenau Gwent

Welsh and English language are key components in Blaenau Gwent's history, culture and social fabric. However, the area does have the lowest use of Welsh Language in Wales.

No public service can achieve the necessary increases in Welsh language use by itself, and effective delivery requires the concerted joined-up effort of all partners and the engagement and participation of the residents of Blaenau Gwent.

Working in partnership we can create the right conditions in which bilingualism can flourish and thrive, within families and communities, in children and young people, and within the workplace.

Section 6.2: Cultural Identity and Cohesion

1. Overview

Community Cohesion is about supporting diverse groups of people to live, study and work successfully alongside each other. If people are secure, feel a sense of belonging, are respected and able to express themselves and celebrate their identity and beliefs, they will not be threatened by or benegative toward others who are different from themselves. A key component of this is promoting understanding and harmonious relationships between existing residents and newcomers and developing a shared sense of belonging.

At its simplest the term 'community cohesion' is used to describe how everyone in a geographical area lives alongside each other with mutual understanding and respect. Community cohesion is where every person has the equal chance to participate and has equal access to services. It is about integration, valuing difference and focusing on the shared values that join people together. It conveys a sense of acceptance and integration and of developing shared values. It is also concerned with supporting communities to be resilient when problems and tensions arise (*Getting On Together - a Community Cohesion Strategy for Wales, Welsh Government, 2010*)

Within this part of the Well-being Assessment we will consider a range of community issues which include emerging cohesion themes and the latest data exploring the impact of issues such as; Modern day Slavery, radicalisation and community intolerances and the influences this has on incidents of hate crime. This will include full consideration of the results of recent community engagement, and will also explore whether existing partnership arrangements and plans can adequately address these emerging issues or whether new approaches need exploring in order to prevent community tensions arising in the longer term.

2. What is the data saying?

2.1 At a Blaenau Gwent level

We know that for most people Blaenau Gwent is a good place to live, study and work, but we cannot take this for granted. Community cohesion often breaks down not because of differences between and within different groups of people, but because of the social, economic and environmental challenges that people face. If left unchecked, these challenges can help to undermine feelings of trust and security. Emerging themes have been recognised as area-wide cohesion concerns which are also reflected at a national level.

Hate Crime

Hate crimes and incidents are any crime or incident where the prejudice of the perpetrator against an identifiable person, or group of persons, is a factor in determining who is victimised. This includes anyone targeted or perceived to be targeted because of their race or ethnic origin (this incorporates nationality or national origin), religion or belief, transgender status, sexual orientation and disability.

Definition of hate crime

A hate incident is:

Any incident, which may or may not constitute a criminal offence, which is perceived by the victim or any other person, as being motivated by prejudice or hate, such as name calling or intimidation

Whilst a hate crime is defined specifically as:

Any hate incident, which constitutes a criminal offence, perceived by the victim or any other person, as being motivated by prejudice or hate, such as criminal damage or assault.

The Association of Chief Police Officers

Figures released by the National Police Chiefs' Council shows that in the week following the vote to leave the EU the UK number of incidents rose by 58 per cent. Although national figures have since reduced, public attitudes and behaviours in the wake of the EU referendum have highlighted a discourse particularly in race/faith relations, indeed the period post Brexit may have been seen by a minority as an opportunity to air deep-seated hatred. Therefore, this rise in hate related incidents could be reflective of underlying divides existing in communities.

- 20% increase on the first two weeks of July 2016 compared with the same period in 2015
- 3,192 cases reported 16-30 June 2016
- 3,001 cases between 1-14 July 2016

Source: *True Vision, National Police Chief's Council*

Victim Support

Figure CC01:

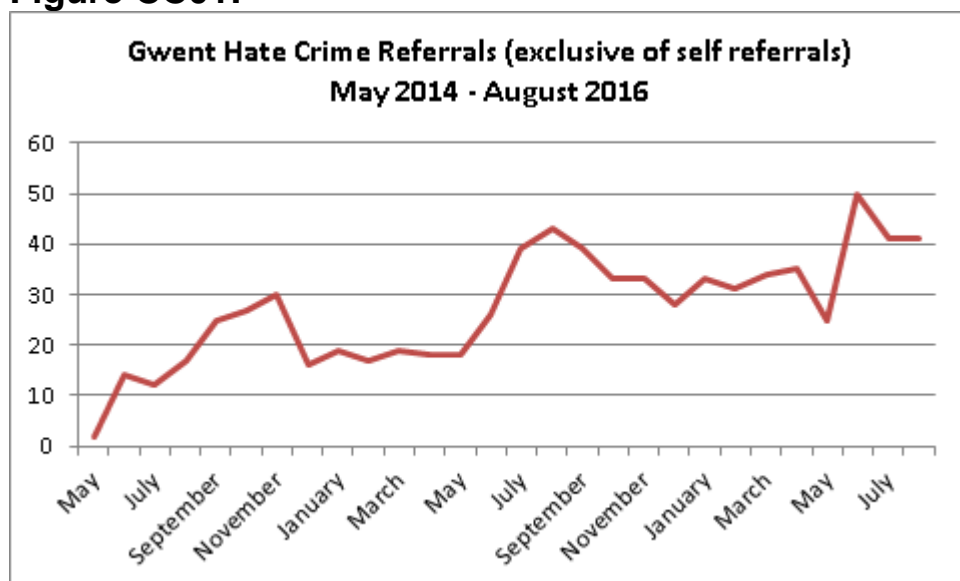


Figure CC01 highlights the reported hate crime referrals in Gwent during the lead up to and immediately after the EU referendum (May 2015 - July 2016) this information has been recorded by the National Third Party reporting organisation, Victim Support.

The above graph clearly recognises a sharp increase in recording in June 2016 for the Gwent Police area, although the rate of hate crime offences in Blaenau Gwent, at 7.0 per 10,000 populations, was the same as the rate for Wales (Source: Local Government Data Unit) which reflected a national increase.

Victim Support provide an advice and advocacy support service to all victims of hate crime, this service (funded in Wales via Welsh Government) also acts as a third party reporting organisation whereby victims can report their experiences to Victims Support (should they not choose to report directly to the police) via a secure web link (www.reporthate.victimsupport.org.uk) or by completing a referral form which can be mailed into the Victim Support PO box (detailed on their website). Victim Support also automatically receive

notifications of all hate crime occurrences recorded on Niche (Police recording system) from all 4 Police forces throughout Wales. This ensures that all victims regardless of their method in reporting will receive some level support and/or advice from Victim Support.

Prevent

Prevent is one strand of the UK counter terrorism strategy. The overall aim of Prevent is to stop people being drawn in to supporting violent extremism by raising awareness of the issues and supporting those who may be vulnerable to radicalisation.

Extremism can flourish where different parts of a community remain isolated from each other; this has been experienced throughout the UK in a number of places and was recognised to be the instigating factor of the Oldham and Bradford riots (2001). More integrated communities will be more resilient to the influence of extremists. Intolerances are less likely to be accepted by communities which come together to challenge it.

The PREVENT has five main objectives:

- to challenge the ideology behind violent extremism and support mainstream voices;
- disrupt those who promote violent extremism and support the places where they operate;
- support individuals who are vulnerable to recruitment, or have already been recruited by violent extremists;
- increase the resilience of communities to violent extremism; and
- To address the grievances which ideologues are exploiting.

The growing far right narrative in pockets of some South Wales communities has become a growing concern amongst Gwent Prevent partners; this has

been evidenced by far right groups in some areas of Wales communicating messages of racial discrimination and prejudice on open source social media. Most communities are resilient to these extremist views, however there are some areas where their influence may have increased. Whilst the reasons for this are multifaceted they may be related to the experience of poverty and perceptions of unfairness, particularly related to competition for resources (i.e. affordable housing, employment opportunities, public sector services etc.) within long established settled communities.

One of the measures which has been implemented to support tolerance and to circumvent racial prejudices from developing in communities includes anti-racism workshops, facilitated by Show Racism the Red Card. Show Racism the Red Card (SRtRC) is an anti-racism charity which aims to raise awareness amongst young people about racism. SRtRC make use of the position of professional footballers / other sports stars as role models to deliver an anti-racism message via workshops which can be used to talk sensitively and effectively about racism - allowing schools to be proactive in promoting racial equality.

Over the period 2014/15, SRtRC delivered 39 workshops in 26 schools and 2 youth clubs across the West Gwent region. This included engaging with approximately 1,550 young pupils.

Figure CC02 below includes a list of schools that participated in the most recent workshops.

Figure CC02:

School	No of Pupils	Workshops
Abertillery Primary School	27	1
Brynmawr Comprehensive School	150	2
St Joseph's Primary School	27	1
Bryngwyn Primary School	30	1
Blaenycwm Primary School	31	1
Tredeggar Comprehensive School	135	2
Queen Street Primary School	30	1
Tredeggar Comprehensive School	150	2
Brynbach Primary School	29	1
All Saints Primary School	30	1

Below is an extract from the evaluation of these workshops, provided by pupils who attended some of the sessions in Blaenau Gwent:

“I LEARNT THAT RACISM IS HATEFUL AND THAT YOU SHOULD NOT TREAT ANYONE DIFFERENTLY BECAUSE THEY HAVE A DIFFERENT SKIN COLOUR.”

“I LEARNT ABOUT DIFFERENT STEREOTYPES AND HOW WE CAN BE MORE CAREFUL ABOUT WHAT WE SAY.”

“BLACK IS THE RIGHT WORD TO SAY IF YOU SAY IT POLITELY, COLOURED IS THE WRONG WORD TO SAY.”

“EVERYBODY IS DIFFERENT AND PEOPLE DO IT OUT OF JEALOUSY AND IGNORANCE.”

“RACISM CAN BE LOTS OF DIFFERENT TYPES, NAME CALLING, ATTACKS AND CAN AFFECT THE REST OF YOUR LIFE.”

“A LOT OF PEOPLE IN MY STREET SAY VERY RACIST WORDS AND NOW I KNOW WHAT THEY MEAN AND THEY AREN'T VERY NICE.”

Community Cohesion, Loneliness and Social Isolation

Loneliness and isolation is a national problem that crosses all boundaries of social class, race, gender identification, sexual orientation, financial status and geography.

Ageing Well in Wales (a national programme hosted by the Older People's Commissioner for Wales) recognised that loneliness has an effect on mortality and is associated with poor mental health and conditions such as cardiovascular disease, hypertension and dementia.

Anyone can find themselves disconnected from their community, however older people are one group at particular risk (Griffin, 2010). Estimates of the extent of older adult loneliness vary, with some studies suggesting that 5% to 16% of people aged 65 and over are lonely (Luanaigh and Lawlor, 2008).

Similarly, Age UK (2010) states that the figure of those often or always lonely is between 6% and 13%. From this research we can estimate that around 10% of UK residents aged over 65 are lonely most or all of the time (Victor, 2011), with many more at risk of loneliness (Bolton, 2012). Amongst the oldest in society, those aged over 80 years, rates of self-reported loneliness climb steeply to approximately 50% (Age UK, 2010). With an increasing older population (by 2035 it is projected that those aged 65 and over will account for 23 per cent of the total population (ONS). Future well-being needs to consider the implications this may have on the individual and on community cohesion.

Modern Day Slavery

There are many different characteristics that distinguish slavery from other human rights violations, however only one needs to be present for slavery to exist. Someone is in slavery if they are: forced to work - through mental or physical threat; owned or controlled by an 'employer', usually through mental or physical abuse or the threat of abuse; dehumanised, treated as a commodity or bought and sold as 'property'; physically constrained or has restrictions placed on his/her freedom of movement.

Contemporary slavery takes various forms and affects people of all ages, gender and races, this includes;

- Forced Labour
- Bonded Labour
- Human Trafficking
- Descent-based slavery
- Child Slavery
- Slavery in supply chains
- Forced marriage

A year on year national increase in recording Modern Slavery crimes evidences both an increased emphasis to raise awareness amongst services to respond and persecute offences and also to improve the efforts and pathways available to support victims.

There are many challenges associated with measuring the scale of modern slavery in the UK. The Home Office's two most reliable sources of data about modern slavery are:

1. The National Referral Mechanism (NRM), a support process to which a range of organisations refer potential victims; and
2. Annual Strategic Assessments published by the National Crime Agency (NCA), which supplement NRM (National Referral Mechanism) data with additional intelligence from relevant agencies

Both data sources show a consistent and sustained increase in the detection of modern slavery in the UK since data was first collected. The most recent Strategic Assessment reported that 2,744 potential victims were encountered in 2013. This is an increase of 22 percent compared with 2012.

2.2 At a neighbourhood area level

We do not have data available for this measure at this level but will explore it if identified as a PSB priority.

2.3 Interpretation of data

Hate crime

Whilst taking into consideration the national increase immediately post BREXIT, hate crimes rates remain statistically low, but the low level of recording may not reflect all community experiences. Under reporting rates have been attributed to a host of factors most noticeably the lack of confidence amongst victims to come forward, with some victims concerned that they won't be believed or that the involvement of services may escalate the situation.

The misunderstanding amongst communities and services that a hate crime is only associated with race or ethnicity can also be a cause for under reporting. This misinterpretation may also result in hate incidents being mis-recorded, particularly when victims have been targeted because of their sexual orientation, faith, disability.

The term community cohesion and what this means for Blaenau Gwent remains an on-going challenge. In one sense a cohesive community can be a place where people have a shared vision, but it can also be argued that shared characteristics among some people can be exclusive of others. For instance, new community members or community members with protected characteristics may feel isolated and in some instances be targeted because of their difference. Therefore, we may need to accept that what constitutes cohesion can differ from neighbourhood to neighbourhood or even from street to street.

2.4 What are the critical issues for public services to consider?

Blaenau Gwent needs strong, resilient and harmonious communities that can respond effectively to the increasing pace and scale of economic, social; and cultural change. To encourage and nurture cohesive communities we need to reflect that cohesion is everyone's responsibility and that each public sector organisation has an important role in working at strengthening global citizenship and building a more tolerant Blaenau Gwent;

To do this partners may need to consider ways in which we;

- promote equality and enhance citizenship, ensuring people from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities;
- ensure that people are trusting of one another and are trusting of local institutions to act fairly.

Consideration needs to be given to the issue of loneliness and isolation for specific vulnerable groups, such as older people. One critical issue for partnership consideration is the importance of accessible and affordable public and community transport being available for older people living in Blaenau Gwent.

3. What research exists to help us develop a response to this/these issues?

Research published by the Runnymede Trust in 2009 suggested that white working class communities often felt that resources were allocated unfairly, in favour of ethnic minority communities. Developing grass root level links with communities can help with early intelligence gathering. Anti-poverty programmes such as Communities First who are working at this level are a useful resource of local information, however the recent review of the Communities First programme may have an impact on how well equipped we are in responding to community concerns. Public Sector partners may need to consider their role in supporting communities to reject community narrative that support and distribute messages of intolerance. This includes listening to the concerns and fears expressed in the community, such as misconceptions around preferential treatment of some groups. There may also be a need to take action to dispel myths and to ensure transparency about decision-making. This can help local people understand and accept how and why priority decisions are made.

Whilst cases remain low in Blaenau Gwent, there has been a recent and growing concern of far right rhetoric targeted towards children and young people within some communities of the South Wales Valleys; this has been evidenced on open source social media (Facebook, Twitter)

Research carried out by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (Hidden in Plain Sight, 2011) indicates there is significant under reporting of disability related harassment to public authorities. This may suggest a lack of recognition of partners (Hidden in Plain Sight partially referenced local authorities) in the role they should play in encouraging reporting of harassment.

The impact of hate crimes can be far greater than other crimes without a bias motivation; victims can feel an acute sense of isolation and experience a greater fear than that experienced by other victims of crime. This concern as well as lessons learnt from a number of high profile cases (Fiona Pilkington) there been more emphasis placed on partnership collaboration to respond to cases and their underlying causes.

Community Cohesion, Loneliness and Social Isolation

Tackling loneliness and isolation is inherently preventative in terms of delaying or avoiding the need for more intensive support. While the evidence around which interventions are most effective in alleviating loneliness and isolation has limitations, we know that flexible support, ideally based within the community, and developed with the involvement of older people is effective.

Emma Collins (IRISS - Institute for Research and Innovation in Social Services).

However the issue is not limited to older people, it can impact on younger people as well. In 2010 the Mental Health Foundation (via a study they conducted which examined how modern society has changed the way people connect with each other) recognised loneliness to be a greater concern among young people than within the elderly community. The 18 to 34-year-olds surveyed were more likely to feel lonely often, to worry about feeling alone and to feel depressed because of loneliness than the over-55s.

4. Five ways of working

4.1 Collaboration

Community cohesion as a strategic aim can only be achieved through practical support across a broad range of policy and service delivery. The Welsh Government Community Cohesion Strategy (Getting on Together, 2010) conducted research into the policy areas that have a significant impact on how well a community gets on together, these included; housing, learning, communication, promoting equality and social inclusion, and preventing violent extremism by strengthening community cohesion. This broad range of areas reflects that cohesion is everyone's responsibility and that collaboration is vital to building successful long term interventions.

<i>Adds no value</i>	<i>Adds some value</i>	<i>Adds moderate value</i>	<i>Critical to tackle the issue</i>
			X

4.2 a) Integration – links with themes

This chapter has outlined themes and emerging concerns that effect people and/or communities with all of these issues (hate crime, intolerance, and community isolation) reflecting a social and cultural element.

<i>Economic</i>	<i>Social</i>	<i>Environmental</i>	<i>Cultural</i>
	X		X

4.2b) Integration –Contribution to the National Goal



Supporting Commentary

- Community cohesion describes the ability of communities to function and grow in harmony together rather than in conflict. Cohesion can, therefore, have a significant impact on the mental and physical wellbeing of residents and/or communities, and an improved sense of belonging will invariably have a positive knock on effect to the socio economic triggers within Blaenau Gwent.
- Supporting communities to gain a strong sense of belong which is inclusive to all groups is in its own right a means to promoting equality, and promoting equality is a requirement, under the Equality Duty, ensuring that all public sector bodies in Wales work towards: fostering good relations by tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people from different groups; eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; and advancing equality of opportunity.
- Responding to prejudices and promoting inclusion by tackling discrimination and promoting equal opportunities.
- Nurturing an area that has a strong sense of identity which is inclusive and reflect all cultures is essential in securing the wellbeing of future generations.

4.3 Thinking to the Long Term

Consider the known / likely / potential impact on well-being in the short, medium and long term.

Short term (1-2)	<i>Responding to issues that are effecting residents who are marginalised because of their differences (Hate crime, Prevent, Modern Day slavery)</i>
Medium term (2-5 years)	<i>Promoting equality of opportunity. Breaking down prejudices by reflecting the similarities of communities and limiting community division</i>
Long term (10 years plus)	<i>Improvements in community identity and sense of belonging, particularly regarding minority groups, Social inclusion of residents who are disenfranchised or socially isolated.</i>

4.4 Prevention

Preventing community division, before intolerances and community isolation can present itself, is important to ensuring a sustainable approach to nurturing cohesive communities. Learning and education has the potential to be a very powerful tool in promoting integration and mutual respect, particularly as learning can take place at different times in our lives. This presents invaluable opportunities for positive cohesion messages to be promoted through learning experiences across all age groups and backgrounds.

4.5 Involvement

During the 'Blaenau Gwent We Want' Public Engagement Programme our topic 'community cohesion' was assigned to 56 comments in total (1%). 29 comments were about the need to improve community cohesion within the borough. 10 comments were about how people felt that community cohesion was something that is special about Blaenau Gwent with a good community spirit and togetherness.

The most common theme emerging was the need to build more supportive communities and organise more events to bring people together.

Our closely related topic 'community spirit' received 119 comments (3%) overall and was the 3rd most popular topic (71 comments, 12%) when we asked what is special about Blaenau Gwent.

Examples of comments we received:



Selection of relevant images from 'Blaenau Gwent We Want' process



5. What is currently being done to tackle this issue?

5.1 Is this issue currently being tackled in partnership?

The critical issues highlighted at 2.4 feature are currently being explored by the Fair & Safe group within the single integrated plan overseen by the PSB. This work includes the following areas:

Tackling discrimination, harassment and victimisation in the community.

5.2 What wider assets could assist in tackling this issue?

There are currently several multi agency groups supporting the themes reflected in the chapter these include;

- Fair and Safe (Single Integrated Plan thematic group), which supports element of Hate crime, Prevent
- Pan Gwent Contest board, (Prevent and tackling Prevent cases of interest (CHANNEL))
- Pan Gwent Anti Modern Day Slavery Group.
- Strategy for Older People, 50+ Stakeholder Partnership (information and engagement)

6. What this tells us about Well-being in Blaenau Gwent

As reflected within the UK Government Hate crime Action Plan (Action Against Hate, July 2016) we will only be able to drive down hate crime by tackling the prejudice and intolerance that fuel it. Unless there is great collaboration to challenge prejudice and to educate young people, hate crime will persist. This type of community prejudice also has a greater impact on cohesion, in particular how well communities get on with each other. The above narrative also acknowledging the importance of working more preventatively.

Establishing good practice in Blaenau Gwent schools, to focus on breaking down intolerances before attitudes/ intolerances solidify, will have a positive impact in communities. There is also a need to celebrate diversity, which brings its own challenges, through working more regionally and exploring communities that are ethnically different to those within the borough.

Social Isolation and the effects of loneliness within Blaenau Gwent may require further investigation, but as projected, the national rate for the number of over 65s is set to rise and if community isolation accompanies this growth this will have an impact on community cohesion and social wellbeing. Older people experiencing isolation may require practical support, or the provision of transport (including community transport options). Older people experiencing loneliness may also require social support, as well as acknowledgement of the difficulty of admitting loneliness. (*Age UK, Loneliness and Isolation Evidence Review*)

Section 6.3: Sports, Recreation, Arts, Culture and Heritage

1. Overview

Encouraging people to take part in physical and creative activity is vital for the health and well-being of our community and future generations.

Physical activity may include participation in sport or recreational activities and can include taking part in exercise such as going to the gym, swimming, walking in the natural environment, cycling or more adventurous activities such as climbing and kayaking. It may also involve socialising with people in groups or team activities such as exercise sessions, sports clubs or walking groups.

Creative activity may include visiting one of the cultural venues to enjoy a drama, dance or musical performance. It may also include being an active participant in an artistic activity such as dance and drama productions and becoming a member of a choir or a musical group.

Taking part helps people to become more confident and self-assured, as well as boosting personal, physical and mental wellbeing. In young people it raises their aspirations and helps them to gain confidence through performance and participation. For older people, it can help them to re-engage with social networks to prevent isolation and to help them stay active, thereby delaying the onset of chronic illness.

Blaenau Gwent has one of the highest ratios of obesity, diabetes and mental health problems in Wales. It has been proven that participation in an artistic activity not only improves psychological wellbeing but it also prevents health problems getting to a critical status.

In a recent study, Oxford Brooks University physiologist Nick Stewart questioned 375 men and women about their physiological well-being. Some sang in choirs, others sang alone and some played team sports. All three reported high levels of well-being, but the choristers were markedly ahead.

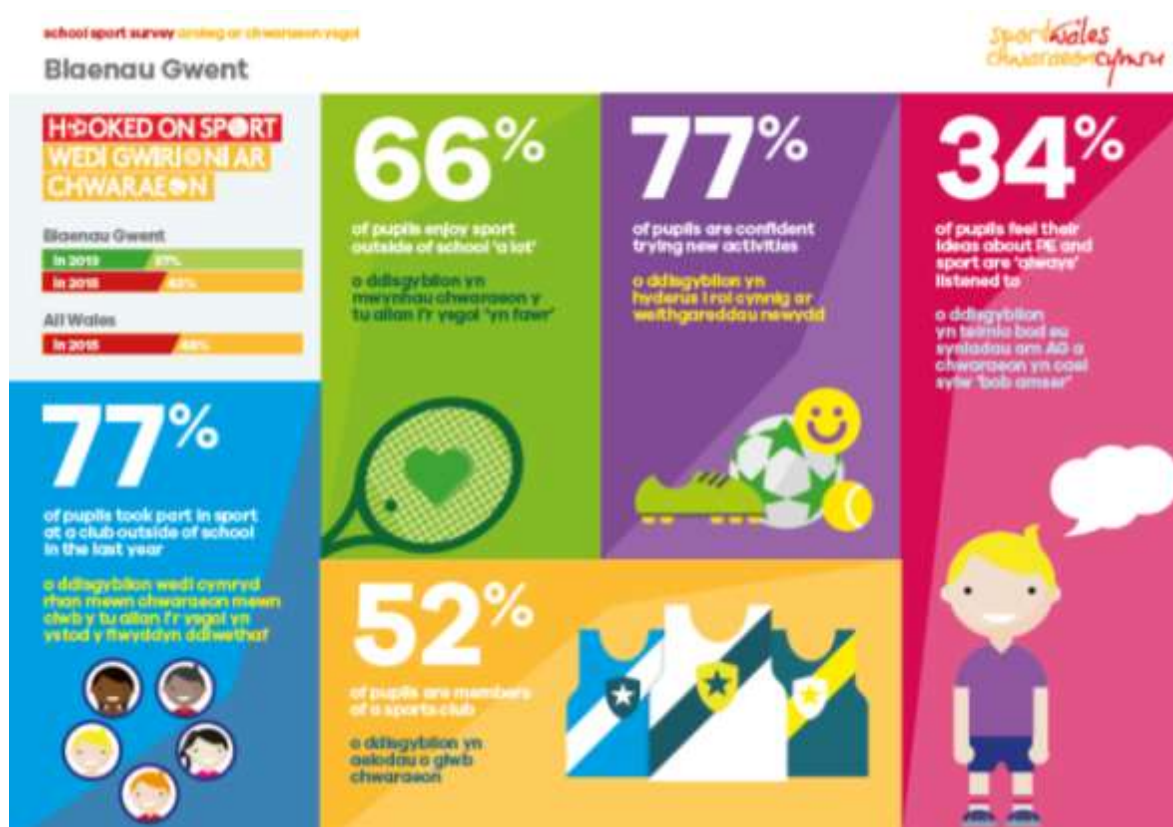
2. What is the data saying

2.1 At a Blaenau Gwent level

Physical Activity

Figure SP1 shows key findings in an infographic for Blaenau Gwent from the [Sport Wales](#) School Sport Survey (2015). “Hooked on Sport” is defined as those pupils who take part in sport or physical activity three or more times a week outside of compulsory PE lessons. In Blaenau Gwent this currently stands at 43%.

Figure SP1: Blaenau Gwent ‘Hooked on Sport’ Summary



Source: Sport Wales

Figure SP2 below shows the percentage of adults in Blaenau Gwent who reported meeting exercise/physical activity guidelines in the past week in 2014-2015 was 29%. This compares with 28% for the Gwent region and 31% for Wales.

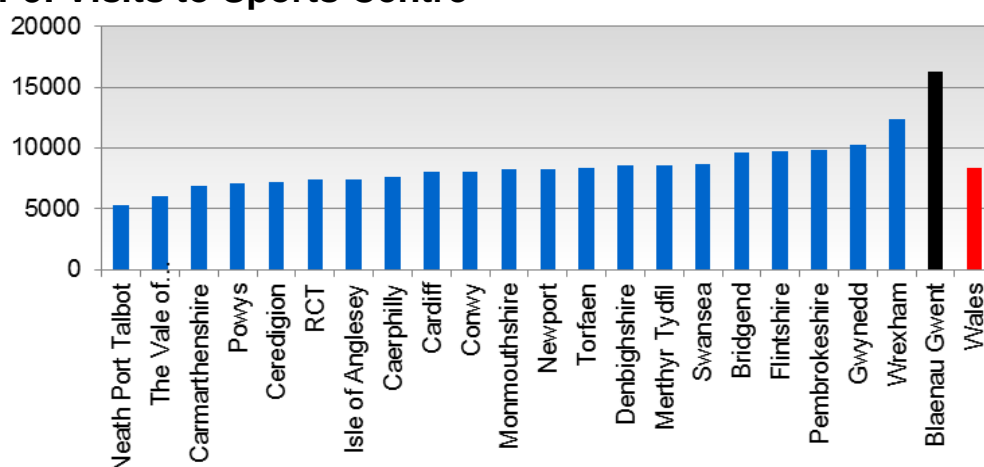
Figure SP2: Adults participating in physical activity



Blaenau Gwent has high quality green spaces and they need to be promoted more with appropriate signage for local residents to help them get there. Far more work needs to be undertaken to mobilise sedentary families and there needs to be an area approach, so resources are shared and collectively monitored e.g. voluntary groups, Aneurin Leisure, Social Services and Tai Calon, Community Connectors etc.

High usage of sports facilities continues to be experienced in 2015/16 with an increase of 2,392 visits, ensuring Blaenau Gwent remains ranked the number one authority across Wales for this indicator as shown in Figure SP03.

Figure SP3: Visits to Sports Centre



Source: Aneurin Leisure Trust

Figure SP04 shows the National Exercise Referral Scheme (NERS) targets for Quarter 1 2016/17 which are set by Public Health Wales (PHW). A target of 180 referrals for each quarter of 2016/17 was set. Data for Quarter 1 shows success as there were 215 referrals, 20% above the quarterly target.

Figure SP04: GP Exercise Referral Scheme Annual Figures 2016/17

	Referrals	Target 1 st Consultations	Target Take Up	16 Week Completions	12 month Completion
PHW Target	720	504	400	200	34
Actual	792	502	486	244	177

Source: Aneurin Leisure Trust

2.2 At a neighbourhood area level

The School Sport Survey 'Hooked on Sport' (2015) data can be broken down on a local school level for in Blaenau Gwent.

- Abertillery Comprehensive School - 37%
- Brynmawr Foundation School - 36%
- Ebbw Fawr Learning Community Secondary Campus - 46%
- Tredegar Comprehensive School - 57%

This clearly shows a significant difference in 'Hooked on Sport' from the lowest in Brynmawr Foundation School at 36% to the highest in Tredegar Comprehensive School at 57% (21% difference).

There is also a gender difference for sports participation, the School Sport Survey (2015) which shows that just 39% of girls are 'hooked on sport' compared to 47% of boys.

Arts and Culture

Within Blaenau Gwent, Aneurin Leisure Trusts Arts Service manages and operates The Metropole Cultural and Conference Centre in Abertillery. Until recently it also managed Beaufort Theatre in Ebbw Vale. This venue has now been transferred to a Community Organisation (Ffin Dance), with the Trusts Arts Service still supporting the programme of artistic activities that take place, including a variety of dance classes.

The Arts, Culture and Events Manager also line manages and is Chair of the Steering Group for [Head4Arts](#), a community arts organisation, based in Llanhilleth Institute, which works across the regions of Blaenau Gwent, Torfaen, Merthyr Tydfil and Caerphilly. The organisation is funded by the [Arts Council for Wales](#).

In 2015/16, Aneurin Leisure Trust Arts Service held 61 professional performances and 83 amateur performances in its venues, with 15,040 people attending the shows. The Arts Service managed 635 participatory arts workshops and classes with 11,659 attendances.

In the same period [Head4Arts](#) managed 20 arts based projects in Blaenau Gwent with 5,183 people attending , of which 12 % were new to 'The Arts'.

2.3 Interpretation of data

Physical Activity

Latest data from the School Sport Survey (2015) shows that just 43% of young people in Blaenau Gwent are “Hooked on Sport” this is 5% under the national average of 48%. Blaenau Gwent was one of only two local authorities in Wales where 100% of schools were surveyed. Therefore, comparisons to other local authorities may be unfair as they did not survey the whole population. There is gender difference for sports participation, the school sport survey (2015) shows that just 39% of girls are hooked on sport compared to 47% of boys.

Arts and Culture

There is no data to suggest inequality in terms of provision. The Arts Service works across genders and abilities, promoting full accessibility in all of its activities.

Working continues with lead creative schools in persuading the schools to organise visits to theatres, so that young people have the opportunity to experience an artistic performance.

One of the main objectives for [Head4Arts](#) in 2016/17 was:

- ***Better levels of engagement with Gypsy/Traveller and migrant Polish Communities.*** Several workshops were held successfully in engaging with these groups.

An Arts Festival was managed by [Aneurin Leisure Trust](#) in July 2015 at Ebbw Vale Festival Park, as a result of [Arts Council of Wales](#) funding, which resulted in over 4,000 visitors gaining access to this free one day event.

2.4 Critical issues for the PSB to consider

Physical Activity

The Nuffield Trust in their report entitled “A decade of Austerity in Wales” (June 2014) estimate that there will be a funding gap of £2.5billion for the NHS in Wales by 2025/26. There is a real appetite and passion within Blaenau Gwent to increase participation in sport and physical activity however due to challenges of [austerity](#) this is becoming increasingly difficult. Therefore, there is a real need to explore the establishment of non-traditional partnerships to own shared outcomes, resources and collectively plan for the future to feed the desire to enhance opportunities in Blaenau Gwent. Below highlights some specific examples:

- Co-location of services needs to be explored to provide better joined up delivery for the customer and reduce operating costs at the same time;
- Creation of wellbeing hubs where multi-faceted staff work from to deliver a range of services that meets the needs of an ageing population but also the needs of traditional families;
- In order to address the gender gap an Us Girls initiative has been implemented in Blaenau Gwent. However, funding for this programme is only secured until 31st August 2017. This is a real concern as local knowledge indicates that sedentary girls do not participate in traditional sporting programmes thus the potential to maintain the gender gap;
- Referrals and retention into the GP Exercise Referral Scheme exceeds the targets set out by Public Health Wales. This highlights the importance of this programme and the need for its expansion. One heart attack costs the NHS £140,000. The annual National Exercise Referral budget for Blaenau Gwent stands at just £99,000. Further investments in this programme would be a cost effective way of reducing pressure on the NHS and GP practices;

- Community Sports Clubs are also under increased financial pressure due to the financial climate facing local Councils. There are some examples of clubs that have positively embraced asset transfer and engaged the local community in the club to ensure sustainability however this is not the case for all clubs. Feedback from clubs to Aneurin Leisure's INSPIRE team indicates that some clubs will fold as a result of financial pressure.
- Across the Arts, there are opportunities for more collaborative working across the public service departments. By coordinating joined up working at local levels, the cultural sector can demonstrate better outcomes for a health and wellbeing agenda.

Some examples include:

- Co-ordinating workshops and activities by working with people at risk of isolation
- Participatory arts activities such as tea dances and contemporary dance help those at risk of obesity and diabetes;
- Joining a singing or operatic group is proven to help with those at risk of dementia;
- Working with theatre groups such as Theatr FFynonn and Taking Flight Theatre ensures inclusion and accessibility, helping the less able in social activity and confidence building;

3. What research exists to help us develop a response to this/ these issues?

Physical Activity

The Welsh Health Survey results (2015) stated that:

- 59% of adults were classified as overweight or obese, including 24% were obese;
- 51% of adults reported currently being treated for an illness such as 20% being treated for high blood pressure, 14% for a respiratory illness, 12% arthritis, 13% mental health illness, 8% for a heart condition and 7% for diabetes;
- 33% of adults reported that their day to day activities were limited because of a health problem, including 7% with a limiting long-standing illness.

According to Welsh Government (2017) being physically active is essential for good health and wellbeing. Therefore, it is important to implement initiatives to increase sport and physical activity.

Well-being Hubs

Aneurin Leisure Trust is carrying out research into the co-location of facilities at well-being hubs, examples being [Bromley-By-Bow](#) and [West Sussex Wellbeing](#).

Arts and Culture

The above examples of Theatre Ffynnon and Taking Flight Theatre are exemplars of good practice in making theatre and drama accessible to all.

4. Five ways of working

4.1 Collaboration

Adds no value	Adds some value	Adds moderate value	Critical to tackle the issue
			<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Higher expectations of living• Healthy Lifestyle• Regular Exercise• Diet• Reduce alcohol consumption and smoking habits

√4.2 a) Integration – links with themes

Economic	Social	Environmental	Cultural
X	X	X	X

The impact of well-being plays an important role in all of the four areas listed above. The impact of someone having improved wellbeing, whether it is physical, emotional, social or cultural will reduce their likelihood of having low level mental health problems. This will result in more people being work ready if they are unemployed or less likely to take time of work, so providing increased productivity for local companies.

Social community and networks are determinants of good health and sport and culture can have significant benefits on providing networks that promote positive wellbeing. With the high level of green space available in Blaenau Gwent, improving resident's awareness is crucial to increasing physical activity.

A clean and safe environment can have a significant part in whether people are active in their communities and a perceived unsafe environment can have a negative impact on participation for female citizens.

Engaging in accessible, affordable cultural activity or contributing as a volunteer can play a major role in supporting independence, providing an opportunity for people to socialise, which is vitally important as loneliness can speed up cognitive decline and memory problems. There are also significant health benefits of tailored exercise and physical activity for older people, leading to improvements in cardiovascular fitness, muscle strength, balance, mood and cognitive function.

4.2b) Integration –Contribution to the National Goals



Supporting Commentary

4.3 Thinking to the Long Term

Short term (1-2)	<p>Reductions in quality services are already happening due to the de-investment in Communities 1st projects.</p> <p>Without a co-ordinated vision and strategy for wellbeing (agreed at PSB level) there is a high likelihood of increases in anti-social behaviour and early onset of chronic illness such as obesity and mental health, impacting on our next generation.</p> <p>If no new partnerships are agreed between BGCBC, Aneurin Leisure, voluntary organisations and LHB/ PH Wales, to tackle the low risk primary care services, adult chronic illness will accelerate, causing more demand and cost for GPs and wider public sector resources.</p>
Medium term (2-5 years)	<p>Investment in assets supporting greenspace and wellbeing will be required and maximise the opportunity of Blaenau Gwent and the surrounding Heads of the Valleys region as a great place to live and visit.</p>
Long term (10 years plus)	<p>The onset of chronic illness will significantly increase, with statutory provision being made available through shrinking resources.</p>

4.4 Prevention

Physical Activity

- Investment in Leisure assets is required to provide high quality services to local and regional residents. If the offer is right, then customers from further afield will visit the area;
- Further investment in the GP Exercise Referral programme to mobilise sedentary groups and prevent the onset of chronic illness;
- A community engagement model is required for multiple partners to buy into and share resources where possible – LHB to advise on a model of “self-prescribing” and how Aneurin Leisure as the leading provider of wellbeing services can support this;
- Explore time banking models and learn from local organisations who have delivered such programmes in the past and identify best way forward;
- As previously mentioned, investing in Arts and Culture has a proven track record in social inclusion through its events and activities, which promotes mental health and wellbeing. Further examples of good work in this area are:
 - The annual Arty Parky event – working with local community in making arts creations in the outdoors at Bedwellty Park;
 - Menu 4 Life in the Ebbw Fach valley – a regular craft group that meets and creates crafts; and
 - Training for Trainers workshops held throughout the borough which may lead to Arts Awards.

4.5 Involvement

During the 'Blaenau Gwent We Want' Public Engagement Programme our topic 'social activities' was the most popular overall with 366 (9%) total comments being categorised into it. It was also the most popular topic when we asked what would make Blaenau Gwent a better place with 282 comments (11%).

The key issues emerging were a lack of social activities available within the borough, particularly for children and young people; more skate parks being a particularly popular issue.

Our topic 'parks' was also very popular with 143 comments in total (4%) and it was the 3rd most popular topic when we asked what is special about Blaenau Gwent showing that people appreciate and value their local parks.

'Exercise facilities' was the 10th most popular topic overall with 128 comments (3%) and was the 5th most popular topic in response to what is special about Blaenau Gwent (29 comments, 5%). However, there were a number of comments about the need to make leisure centre activities more accessible and to lower the cost of activities.

Our topic 'heritage' received a total of 29 comments (1%) but was the 8th most popular topic when we asked what was special about Blaenau Gwent (17 comments, 3%), similarly 'monuments' was not so popular overall (17 comments, 0%) but was 11th most popular when people talked about what is special about the area (15 comments, 2%) showing that residents feel that our local heritage and monuments are an asset to the area.

Those responding in Lower Ebbw Fach (13 comments, 4%) were less likely to say that there was a lack of social activities compared to other areas (Upper Ebbw Fach 12%, Ebbw Fawr 14%, Sirhowy 17%). Many of the comments from Upper Ebbw Fach related to the cinema in Brynmawr with many saying that it needs to be re-opened.

People responding in the Sirhowy Valley (34 comments, 25%) were considerably more likely to say that parks are special compared to other areas (Lower Ebbw Fach 9%, Upper Ebbw Fach 9%, Ebbw Fawr 9%) with a particular mention to Park Bryn Bach and Bedwellty Gardens.

Respondents in Upper Ebbw Fach (1 comment, 1%) were less likely to say that exercise facilities was something that is special about Blaenau Gwent compared to other areas (Sirhowy 5%, Lower Ebbw Fach 6%, Ebbw Fawr 7%); some unhappy at the recent closure of Nantyglo Leisure Centre.

Examples of comments we received:



Specific comments on barriers to play from children and young people were noted in the Play Sufficiency Assessment. Please see [Baby and Children's Health and Development](#).

Selection of relevant images from 'Blaenau Gwent We Want' process



5. What is currently being done to tackle this issue?

5.1 Is this issue currently being tackled in partnership?

Physical Activity

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council externalised its Sports, Recreation, Arts and Cultural Services by creating a Leisure Trust (Aneurin Leisure Trust) in October 2014. A funding and Management Agreement was signed between both parties that requires the Leisure Trust to provide up to date six monthly performance reports to the council to be monitored by Scrutiny Committee and the Executive of the Council.

Aneurin Leisure Trust was launched in October 2014 to deliver a range of services which are designed to improve community life through leisure, learning and culture. The Trust is responsible for the operation, management and development of indoor and outdoor sport and leisure facilities, sport and arts development, arts venues, country parks, libraries and Adult Community Learning across Blaenau Gwent.

Blaenau Gwent has a real passion for sport and physical activity and the Inspire Sports Development Team provides participation opportunities for young people and adults of all ages and abilities. Inspire endeavour to support individuals and groups to promote a healthier, happier Blaenau Gwent. Although main aims include the development of sport clubs and increasing participation, we are able to use these activities as a tool to impact on some of the wider social issues such as reducing barriers to participation, increasing community safety, reducing anti-social behaviour, social inclusion and gender equality.

As well as playing host to a plethora of sporting activities, the three sports centres in Blaenau Gwent also host major functions throughout the year, both sporting and social. An all-encompassing membership scheme is also offered.

Arts and Culture

As mentioned previously, tackling the identified issues can only be achieved in partnership at a local, as well as a regional level. For example, many of the partners are currently delivering interventions which operate across a Gwent footprint and wider.

Such partners include:

- **Creu Cymru** – the Arts Development agency for venues in Wales
- **Theatr Nanog** – Aneurin Leisure Trust Arts Service is currently co-producing a production, featuring the life and love story of Aneurin Bevan and Jennie Lee, which we aspire to tour throughout the UK and to take to Edinburgh Fringe Festival in 2018.
- **Arts Council of Wales** and Aneurin Leisure are currently working on a resilience programme to look at future collaborative working across South East Wales and the HOV region.
- **Ffin Dance** – Aneurin Leisure Trust's partnership dance company (which now operates Beaufort Theatre).

5.2 What wider assets could assist in tackling this issue?

- Co-location of services to develop well-being hubs across the area, to support the challenges faced in low risk primary care services is needed. Improving well-being levels of those people who lead sedentary lifestyles is key to creating more healthy and cohesive communities;
- Mobilise sedentary population groups

6. What this tells us about Wellbeing in Blaenau Gwent

- Well-being hubs could be created where multiple services are co-located to serve the different health needs of the public;
- Increased “self-prescribing” needs to be at the heart of future wellbeing planning, using the wide range of skills from the non-medical workforce that already exists – training is required on this in line with LHB protocols;
- Deep rooted community development is required to mobilise sedentary communities and this can only be achieved through robust collaboration and making organisations accountable;
- Sports, recreation, arts, culture and heritage is a major contributor to the health and well-being of people working and living in Blaenau Gwent.
- Investment in Leisure assets is required to improve the quality of service provided and this needs to be achieved collaboratively for maximum impact.

Section 6.4: Tourism

1. Overview

The Local Authority continually monitors the volume and value of tourism and uses the Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity Monitor (STEAM) to achieve this. The model provides a robust indicative base for monitoring trends based on a monthly and annual basis. It is used by all of the local authorities in Wales and can therefore be used to measure local trends and to measure trends and progress regionally and nationally.

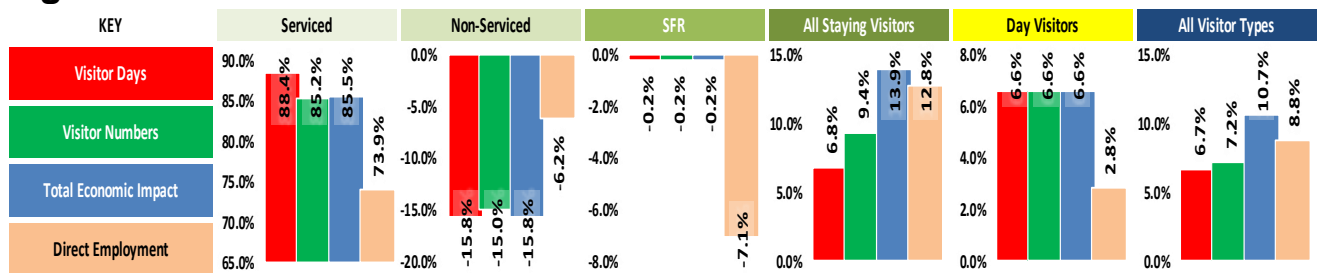
The 2015 report shows that Blaenau Gwent received 675,530 visitors who spent a total of 864,250 days in the area. These visits brought £43.2m into the local economy and supported the full time equivalent of 582 jobs. Since the last Destination Management Plan the area has seen a growth of 7.2% visitors. These visitors have contributed an extra 10.7% into the local economy with an 8.8% increase in those directly employed in tourism.

2. What is the data saying?

2.1 At a Blaenau Gwent level

Figure T01 shows changes in tourism data over the last three years (2012-5).

Figure T01: Tourism in Blaenau Gwent



The term Visitor Days relates to the estimated number of days spent within the area by the different visitor types.

The term Visitor numbers relates to the estimated number of visitors spending time within the area by the different visitor types.

The Economic Impact relates to the estimated visitor spend within the area by the different visitor types.

The Direct Employment is the number of fulltime equivalent jobs supported by tourism by the different visitor type.

The rise in staying visitors (9.4%) is higher than day visitors (6.6%). A further analysis of staying visitors shows the number staying with friends and relatives remaining steady but there has been a decline in non-serviced accommodation. Countering this, there has been a large rise in those staying in serviced accommodation with an 85.2% rise in visitor numbers. The data for serviced accommodation show 27,190 visitors spent a total of 52,570 days in the area. These visits brought £7,191,000 into the local economy and directly supported the full time equivalent of 100 jobs.

There is a favourable comparison of Blaenau Gwent's performance over the past 3 years in comparison to the South East Wales region. Expenditure in the accommodation sector has risen by 73.5% locally compared to 26% across the region. However, expenditure on food and drink rose by 8.9% in Blaenau Gwent compared to 9% in S E Wales, and recreation 7.2% against 9% regionally. Shopping has only risen by 5.1% compared to 8% regionally, and transport 7.6% compared to 9%. The spend by visitors in serviced accommodation has risen by 85.5% locally and 25% across the region, day visitors spent 6.6% more locally but 9% more across the region.

2.2 At a neighbourhood area level

Tourism data available at this level cannot be guaranteed to be reliable due to the sources available. In some areas it may also breach confidentiality agreements.

2.3 Interpretation of data

The data presented covers the 3 year period that largely covers the last Destination Management Plan. The 2016 data is not available yet so the data is for the years 2012-15.

Each Destination Management Plan covers a 3 year period and this is robust enough to cover any short term fluctuations that may distort the data.

The Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity Monitor (STEAM) is used across Wales. It is accepted as the basis for identifying trends in tourism spend, value and activity. The model calculates data using

- Information on occupancy percentages each month for each type of accommodation;
- Bed stock for each type of accommodation within the areas to be surveyed;
- Attendance at attractions/major events by month;

The model is built up from the above basic information, by drawing on data from published or unpublished sources, local interviews and supplementary trade enquiries to define the economic parameters within which the local tourism sector operates. STEAM is the singularly most important method for measuring tourism data in Wales. However, it should be used to measure annual and monthly trends rather than quantitative data.

The data is calculated 'bottom up' using multipliers and therefore gives an accurate snapshot on a regional basis rather than dividing down national data.

For the purpose of this report we have compared the local data to the South East Wales region which gives a better like for like comparison than across the whole of Wales.

2.4 What are the critical issues for public services to consider?

Important issues for PSB consideration are:

- Connectivity – The SE Wales Metro, proposed as part of the Capital Region Deal, will be important in the development of sustainable tourism in Blaenau Gwent. Much importance has been given to it enabling Blaenau Gwent residents to access employment, however, it also has an important role in bringing visitors into the area. The current transport service is severely reduced on Sundays, however the Metro should offer a 7 day service that will benefit the short break market. It is also imperative that public transport integrates with cycle routes, walking trails and attractions.
- Environment - A clean environment and safe communities are important in attracting visitors. Media reports of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) such as youths in town centres, fly tipping, mountain fires, and off road biking do unmeasurable harm to a fragile tourism economy. ASB needs to be addressed to restore the reputation of the area.

- Perceptions - The perception of our area is often dominated by historical industrial portrayals and the subsequent decline through the post-industrial passage of time, yet when visitors arrive they are impressed by the beauty of and the welcome received in the valleys. Changing these perceptions will not be immediate but we must continue to build on the positives and unite to inform new audiences of why they should visit the Valleys, capitalising on our proximity to the Brecon Beacons.
- Partnership Working - Blaenau Gwent is one of the smallest Local Authorities in Wales and the UK. Whilst this has some disadvantages, it also has many advantages. It is broadly recognised that we achieve more by working together than working in isolation. A better knowledge of the sector, developing local supply chains and forming cohesive and clear partnerships can maximise our return from visitors.
- Town Centres - Addressing the difficulties faced by our town centres is a far broader task than can be delivered by a Destination Management Plan, however we must strive to maintain a thriving and vibrant welcome to residents and visitors alike.
- [Circuit of Wales](#) - The £425m project could be far more than just a motor circuit. It could be a destination in its own right. In addition to the track there could be hotels, brand centres other leisure facilities and events that could attract visitors throughout the year. It is essential we have a trained workforce and race friendly facilities in readiness to welcome visitors should the circuit open. Similarly, we need to ensure the destination as a whole can benefit from such significant inward investment opportunities and associated visitor numbers.

3. What research exists to help us develop a response to this/ these issues?

Connectivity – The Metro will give a more frequent and faster service with integrated ticketing and integration between different modes of transport.

The 2016 Wales Visitor Survey for the South East Wales Partnership backs up these priorities:

- Environment – 44% of visitors to South East Wales visit because of our countryside and landscape;
- Perceptions – 45% of visitors said their visit had exceeded expectation (51% met expectation). This rose to 54% of new visitors;
- Town Centres – more visitors came to SE Wales for a city or town break than the rest of Wales;
- Major projects can bring about a rapid increase in tourism development. Bike Park Wales has given an increase in tourism accommodation in Merthyr and the surrounding area. The impact of Circuit of Wales could have the same effect across the region;
- Walking trails – The Ramblers and MacMillan Cancer Support report into walking for health showed being active slashes the risk of getting heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, colon cancer, breast cancer and Alzheimer's disease by 20%-50%

4. Five ways of working

4.1 Collaboration

<i>Adds no value</i>	<i>Adds some value</i>	<i>Adds moderate value</i>	<i>Critical to tackle the issue</i>
		X	

Through partnership working across the region, tourism has delivered and continues to deliver a number of key projects such as

- Southern Wales – travel trade marketing group.
- The Valleys – Consumer marketing group.
- The Valleys Walking Festival.
- Wales Visitor Surveys.
- South East Wales Cycling Project

The local authority works collaboratively with Welsh Government, other local authorities, local businesses, trusts, public bodies and the voluntary sector in delivering the Destination Management Plan. In Blaenau Gwent we are working together to deliver the Blaenau Gwent Destination Management Plan through stakeholders and the Destination Management Partnership.

4.2 a) Integration – links with themes

<i>Economic</i>	<i>Social</i>	<i>Environmental</i>	<i>Cultural</i>
X	X	X	X

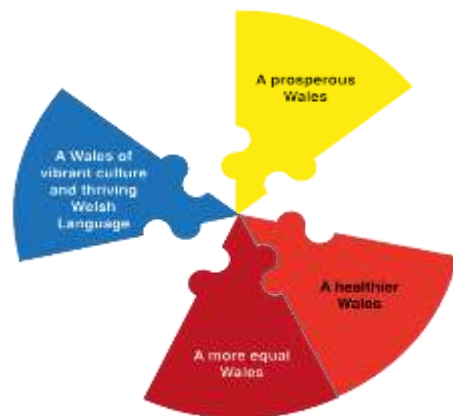
Economic – A stronger local economy will result from safe and clean environment and community.

Social – A proud and strong community takes more care of its environment.

Environmental – A safe and clean environment attracts more visitors making our businesses more economically sustainable.

Cultural – Our local heritage and culture fosters pride in our heritage and contributes to social well-being.

4.2b) Integration –Contribution to the National Goal



Supporting Commentary

- The Destination Management Plan aims to improve the profitability of our business performance through building the capacity of the industry to utilise the latest technology to reach and influence potential customers and supporting higher profitability in tourism businesses through tools such as yield management;
- Walking and activities in the outdoors through the development of walking and cycling routes will benefit the physical and mental wellbeing of the community and visitors;
- By making recreational activities accessible to all;
- Through the use of the language in all our promotional material and celebrating our culture;
- By protecting and promoting our unique natural and built environment, encouraging use of sustainable transport and supporting businesses in securing the Green Dragon environmental standard awarded to organisations that are taking action to control their impacts on the environment.

4.3 Thinking to the Long Term

<i>Short term</i> <i>(1-2)</i>	Delivery of the Blaenau Gwent Destination Management Plan
<i>Medium term</i> <i>(2-5 years)</i>	Development of a Tourism Strategy for Blaenau Gwent
<i>Long term</i> <i>(10 years plus)</i>	A thriving tourism industry with successful local businesses.

4.4 Prevention


A Destination Management Plan and Tourism Strategy for Blaenau Gwent will provide a focus for tourism delivery in the area. The plan aims to support existing and emerging businesses acting as a catalyst to business growth and development. It will increase visitors to the area and create new employment opportunities.

4.5 Involvement


During the 'Blaenau Gwent We Want' Public Engagement Programme our topic 'tourism' was given to a total of 16 (less than 1%) comments, most of which (12 comments) were about the need to improve tourism to the area.

Our rich heritage, local parks, monuments, beautiful landscapes and proximity to the Brecon Beacons National Park were all mentioned as special attractions to the area. However, respondents did identify a need to regenerate and tidy up the local area, particularly town centres, in order to attract more tourism in future.

Examples of comments we received:

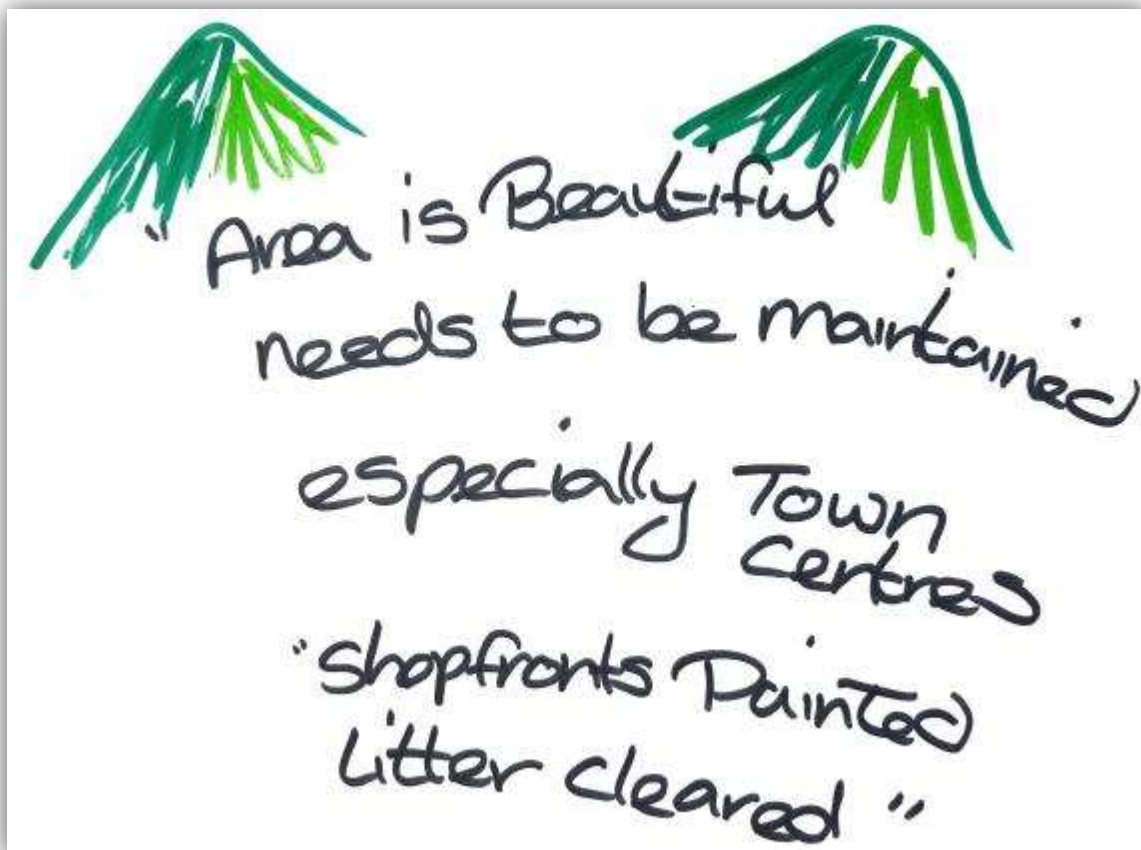


*"Better advertising of
tourist spots"*



*"More tourist attractions
to celebrate our
heritage"*

Selection of relevant images from 'Blaenau Gwent We Want' process



5. What is currently being done to tackle this issue?

5.1 Is this issue currently being tackled in partnership?

Destination Management Plan will be monitored quarterly by the Destination Management Partnership.

5.2 What wider assets could assist in tackling this issue?

Tourism has a strong community base in Blaenau Gwent. All of our 5 local museums are run by volunteers in Blaenau Gwent/Aneurin Leisure run facilities.

We have a strong group of Green Badge Guides who take visitors around our sites.

The Destination Management Partnership is comprised of volunteers from the private, public and voluntary sectors.

6. What this tells us about Well-being in Blaenau Gwent

- Development of the Blaenau Gwent Tourism Strategy
- Delivery of the Blaenau Gwent Town Centres Strategy
- Delivery of the Blaenau Gwent destination Management Plan
- Formation of a Blaenau Gwent Tourism Association
- Re-energising, recruiting and developing of Blaenau Gwent Community Tourism Ambassadors.

Section 6.5: Current and Future Technologies

1. Overview

Globally approximately 40% of the world's population has an Internet connection today according to Internet Live Stats⁷ and this number continues to increase every day.

The definition of an Internet user is defined as 'an individual who can access the Internet, via computer or mobile device, within the home where the individual lives'.

With Blaenau Gwent being one of the most highly deprived areas in Wales and a high proportion of its residents on benefits, becoming digitally active is extremely important to work in conjunction with the Department for Working Pensions (DWP) agenda, with regards to applying for benefits online (Universal Credit, Universal Job Match).

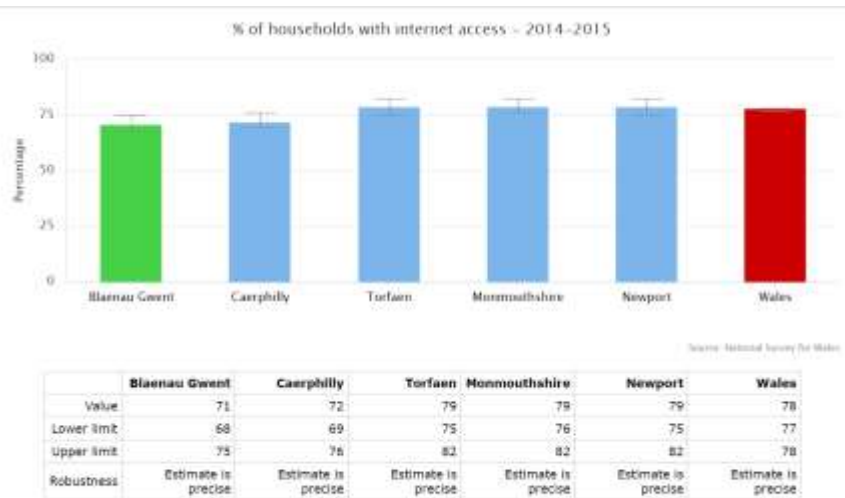
⁷ www.InternetLiveStats.com

2. What is the data saying?

2.1 At a Blaenau Gwent level

Figure FT01 shows that the percentage of households with internet access across the Gwent region in 2014-2015 ranged from 71% in Blaenau Gwent to 79% in Torfaen, Monmouthshire and Newport. This compares with 78% for Wales. The authority also had the lowest percentage of households with Internet access of 22 local authorities in Wales.

Figure FT01:



The statistics suggest that Blaenau Gwent has the highest digital exclusion levels (29%) compared to other local authority areas across Wales.

The Council's Benefit Section has participated in the "Get Blaenau Gwent Online" project over the last 5 years to promote Digital Support Services, whilst the above figures show that there is certainly a lot more to do in this area, the project has steadily gained support / assisted individuals on a one to one basis over the years with the help of support providers.

2.2 At a neighbourhood area level

Local area data has not been sought at this stage but this position can be reviewed following priority setting by the PSB.

2.3 Interpretation of data

According to Welsh Government's report 'Delivering a Digital Wales' (2010) the ability to be able to use these technologies is becoming as important as reading and writing. It further states that individuals, who do not have the skills to be able to get online, or see it as irrelevant, are likely to become increasingly economically and socially excluded.

Digital exclusion can be attributed to many social, economic, environmental and cultural factors including education levels, household tenure, age, health, employment status and socio-economic group etc.

However, a subsequent report written in 2012 stated that infrastructure is no longer a major reason for people to be digitally excluded since it is estimated that 99% of homes in Wales potentially have access to broadband.

Furthermore, according to figures 61% of those aged 65 and over are not currently using the internet. Only 31% of people aged 75 and over have household internet access. Many older people want to go online but are unable to do so because they don't have the necessary skills.

The internet can be used as a key tool which can provide people with up to date news and information and can allow us to stay connected within our communities, which can reduce levels of loneliness and isolation, as well as support better economic decisions (better financial and shopping deals), and increase access to useful services.

DWP Digital agenda, has increased digital activity required for these individuals who need to claim benefits, initially with the introduction of Universal Jobmatch and applying for jobs online.

With Universal Credit being fully implemented in April 2018 across Blaenau Gwent a high emphasis is placed on those making a claim for Universal

Credit, and being able to make this claim online with Universal Credit being digital by default.

Finally, it also important to note that there is a significant proportion of people who have said they don't want to or do not need to use the Internet. Therefore, it will be important for public and private sector organisations to provide information in ways which are accessible to everyone, in the context of an increasingly internet-driven world.

2.4 What are the critical issues for public services to consider?

The critical issues for public services to address is to encourage, support and remove barriers to enable more of Blaenau Gwent communities to become digitally included, as well as assisting people who are digitally included to continually improve their digital literacy levels and skills.

Also for the Public Services Board to consider how alternative, non-digital options for people who choose not to use the internet can be offered, to ensure all of Blaenau Gwent's communities are not disadvantaged in an ever increasing digital world.

3. What research exists to help us develop a response to this/ these issues?

- Research to date has mainly focussed on information sourced from the Local Government Data Unit and other public domain sources.
- Support from Digital Communities Wales who initially funded “Get Blaenau Gwent Online” through Communities 2.0 funding
- Analysis of the outcomes and objectives of the past and current Digital Inclusion Project within BG currently funded through flexible support fund in DWP. Feedback from Digital Inclusion Strategic Partnership (DISP) meeting attendees on what all organisations are currently doing in terms of digital inclusion.
- Digital mapping across Blaenau Gwent
- Further research, to further understand exactly why 29% of Blaenau Gwent’s population do not have access to the internet would be beneficial to be able to better address the needs of the area.
- Further research will be conducted depending on the priorities set by the Public Service Board on the 24 April 2017 to inform the response analysis element.

4. Five ways of working

4.1 Collaboration

<i>Adds no value</i>	<i>Adds some value</i>	<i>Adds moderate value</i>	<i>Critical to tackle the issue</i>
			X

Working with a range of partners will be critical in capitalising on the opportunities afforded by technology.

4.2 a) Integration – links with themes

<i>Economic</i>	<i>Social</i>	<i>Environmental</i>	<i>Cultural</i>
X	X		

Capitalising on the use of technology to assist with all aspects of well-being and prosperity will afford residents with improved opportunities to access local / regional and global experiences.

4.2b) Integration –Contribution to the National Goal



Supporting Commentary

4.5 Involvement

During the 'Blaenau Gwent We Want' Public Engagement Programme just 8 comments were categorised into our 'technology' topic, all of which were received from children and were about how access to good quality technology is vital to the area. There were a further 2 comments related to the internet; 1 about how older people are not using it and the other about the need to improve internet safety.

Selection of relevant images from 'Blaenau Gwent We Want' process



5. What is currently being done to tackle this issue?

5.1 Is this issue currently being tackled in partnership?

Digital Inclusion Project – “Get BG Online”, funded by DWP, managed within the Council’s Benefits Section. Partnership strategic group held attended by third party sector organisations and chaired by Council Elected Members.

5.2 What wider assets could assist in tackling this issue?

- Digital Communities Wales Programme (Blaenau Gwent)
- Digital Inclusion Project
- DWP Digital agenda
- Digital Inclusion Strategic Partnership (DISP)

6. What this tells us about Well-being in Blaenau Gwent

Whilst 71% of Blaenau Gwent's population have access to the Internet, findings indicate that currently there are 29% of people who do not. However, available research does not explicitly provide information as to whether this is through choice, or due to other reasons. Therefore, the Public Services Board may decide to investigate this further through additional research. This could be started by analysing participants of the Digital Inclusion Project.

Blaenau Gwent has the lowest levels of access to the Internet compared to other areas across Wales, and therefore a high number of people who are digitally excluded.

Link this into DWP Digital agenda, considering the effects on those claiming benefits across Blaenau Gwent, specifically when live service for Universal Credit commences in April 2018 which is digital by default.

People who are digitally excluded are more likely to be older, poorer and facing other forms of inequality.

The future trend is that there will be a growing dependence on the use of technology, particularly use of the internet, by society and also the public and private organisations looking to engage with its consumers. The Internet will continue to develop (for example, faster Broadband speeds, increased uses and functions for everyday life) and will continue to be used as a tool to help people socially, economically, environmentally and culturally.

However, at present, there are people who are digitally excluded in Blaenau Gwent who are not currently benefiting from the existing opportunities of digital technology; therefore work which looks to increase digital inclusion levels should continue now, and into the future, in order to support the creation of a fairer society within Blaenau Gwent.



7. Environmental Well-being

Environmental Well-Being

This well-being chapter focuses on environmental well-being. It has been developed collaboratively by partner organisations represented on the Blaenau Gwent Public Service Board.

Environmental well-being is identified as one of the four key sustainable development pillars for improvement by the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

Environmental well-being can be defined as people interacting and living in harmony with our natural environment, doing our very best to live sustainably within our means.

Under the principles of sustainable development environmental well-being should not be seen in isolation, focusing on the needs of only those in the present. Achieving environmental well-being will take appropriate and measured consideration of the consequences of economic prosperity and our social and cultural development of an area now and for future generations. For this well-being assessment for Blaenau Gwent the following sections or 'measures' are considered:

1. [Landscapes and Nature](#)
2. [Hydrology](#)
3. [Air, Water, Noise & Soil Quality](#)
4. [Carbon & Ecological Footprint](#)
5. [Renewable Energy](#)
6. [Waste and Recycling](#)

Section 7.1: Landscape and Nature

1. Overview

The different landscapes and the nature of Blaenau Gwent and how it is perceived can have a significant effect on well-being. It also provides places and opportunities for access and enjoyment. This entices healthy lifestyles and reduces stress.

There is also an economic value as a destination for visitors as well and offering people from our own communities to make a living. Each year the landscapes of Wales are worth £2,870 million from tourism, £385 Million from agriculture and nearly £500 million from forest-based industries. Furthermore, they store 410 million tonnes of carbon.

Source: Natural Resources Wales (NRW) 2016

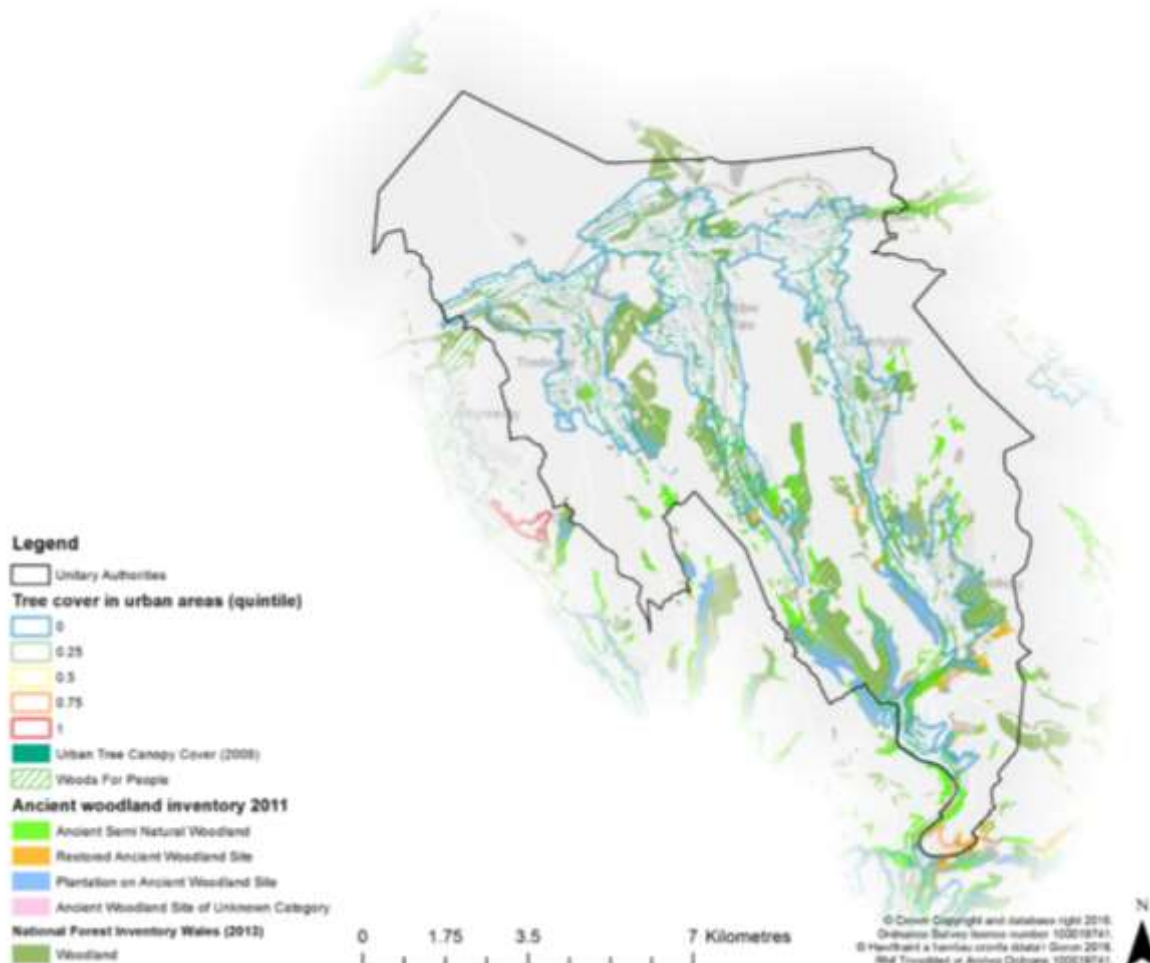
2. What is the data saying?

2.1 At a Blaenau Gwent level

2.1a Woodland

Wales is one of the least wooded countries in Europe - 14% coverage compared to EU average of 37% (Woodland Trust 2011). However, Blaenau Gwent is one of the most wooded countries in Wales, accounting for 22.5% of land use. This cover can be seen in Figure LN01 and includes small areas of broadleaf woodland and upland conifer woodlands which are both close to communities.

Figure LN01: Extent of woodland cover in Blaenau Gwent including ancient woodlands, which are the most important for biodiversity, plantations and urban trees. (NRW 2016b)



In the Area, 590 hectares of the Welsh Government's Woodland Estate (WGWE) is managed by Natural Resources Wales. This is approximately 5% of the land area. These are publically owned forests.

Woodlands and trees provide a variety of benefits to well-being. They help regulate our climate, provide income and jobs from timber and other activities, store carbon, and contribute to reducing flooding. They help produce, protect and enrich soils. Trees improve air quality, and regulate pest and diseases. They play a major role in pollination, soil formation, and nutrient cycling and oxygen production. All of these ecosystem services are vital in supporting well-being.

2.1b Urban

The urban landscape and how it is perceived can have a significant effect on well-being. Access to green space is an important resource. At present 65% of the population in Blaenau Gwent live within 400m of their nearest accessible green space. As shown in Figure LN02 urban trees make up a significant contribution to urban green spaces. In 2009, Wales' mean urban tree cover was estimated at 16.8% (NRW 2014).

Figure LN02: Urban tree cover in Blaenau Gwent. (NRW 2014)

Urban Area	Neighbourhood Area	Tree cover (Percentage)
Aberbeeg & Llanhilleth	Lower Ebbw Fach	28.8%
Abertillery	Lower Ebbw Fach	26.8%
Brynmawr, Nantyglo, Blaina	Upper Ebbw Fach	20.6%
Ebbw Vale & Cwm	Ebbw Fawr	22.1%
Swffryd	Lower Ebbw Fach	11.1%
Tredegar	Sirhowy	20.9%

Table 2 show recorded complaints of issues that have an impact on the environment and well-being of local communities (Gwent Police, 2016)

Figure LN03: Complaints of anti-social behaviour

Complaint category	2014/2015	2015/2016	Diff	%Change
Illicit Tipping	557	621	64	11.5%
Straying dogs	378	308	-70	-18.5%
Noise domestic	300	256	-44	-14.7%
Abandoned Vehicle	81	222	141	174.1%
Dog fouling Enforcement	162	131	-31	-19.1%
Noise dog	135	112	-23	-17.0%
Litter	33	31	-2	-6.1%
Noise Vehicles	23	17	-6	-26.1%
Uncontrolled animals (Straying animals)	2	7	5	250.0%
Noise other animals	13	4	-9	-69.2%
Noise Car alarm	0	2	2	200.0%
Noise road works (Construction/Demolition Sites)	6	1	-5	-83.3%
Noise Industrial	10	1	-9	-90.0%
Total ASB	1700	1713	13	0.8%

Source: Gwent Police Strategic Assessment 2016, using BGCBC data

The data demonstrates a decrease in nine out of the 13 categories of recorded complaints including dog fouling which recorded a 19.1% reduction in complaints from 162 down to 131. The greatest reduction in number of complaints appears to be in the area of 'noise industrial' demonstrating a 90% reduction in complaints (from 10 down to one complaint). Complaints were found to increase in four of the categories including illicit fly tipping which increased by 12% (from 557 to 621 complaints) and abandoned vehicle incidents which increased by 174% (from 81 to 222 complaints).

2.1c Nature

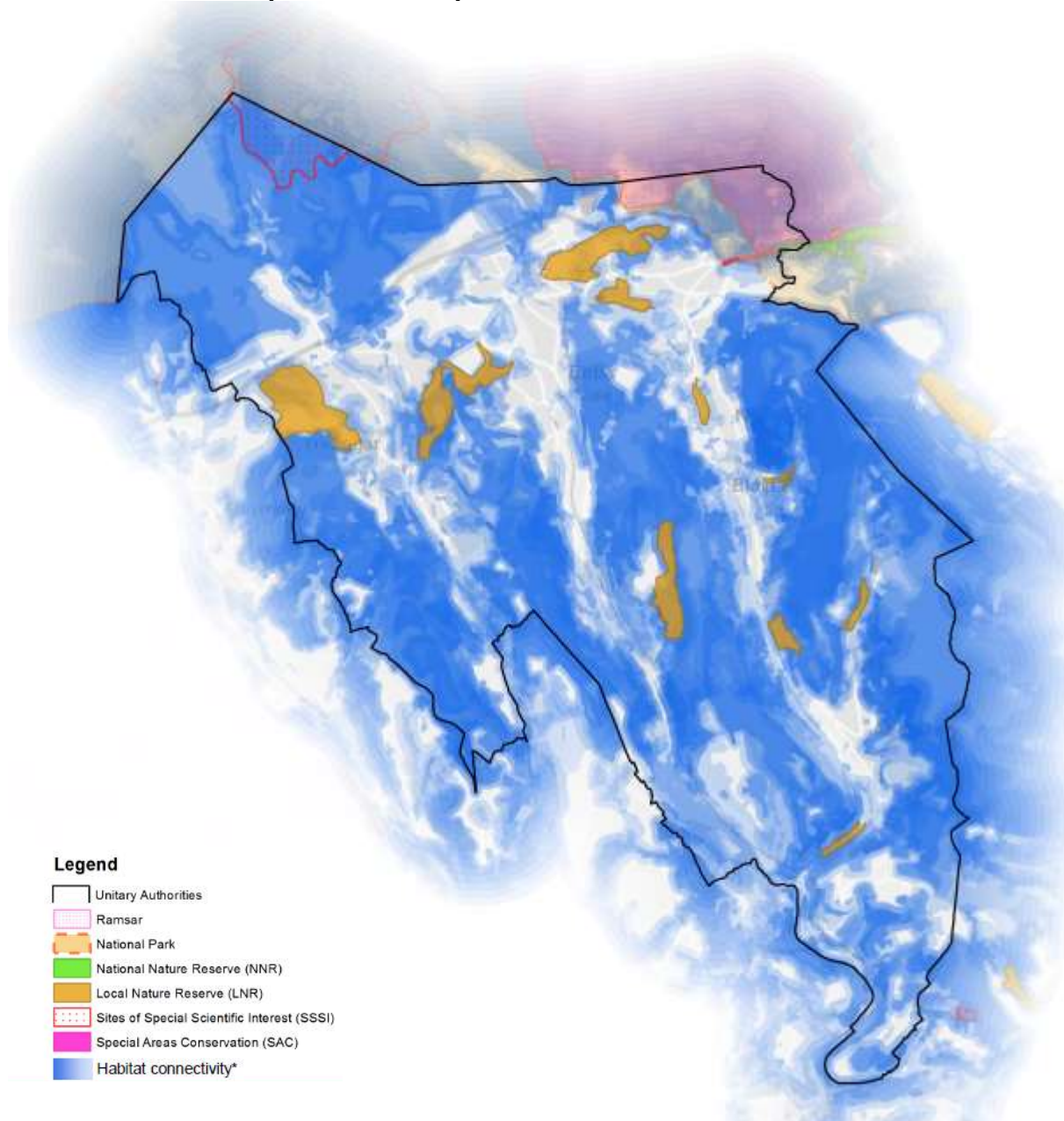
Nature, the animals, plants and other organisms, and the habitats they live in provide a wide range of functional roles. This includes many of the benefits that society relies on, such as productive soils, clean water, and pollination.

There is a wide range of habitats in Blaenau Gwent. The more significant habitats include four Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), seven Local Nature Reserves, 137 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC), one Special Area of Conservation, and two historic landscapes. These are

shown in Figure LN04. In most cases, designated sites are privately owned and have a multi-functional land use, such as livestock grazing. There are currently no plans to designate more sites in Blaenau Gwent.

It has been estimated that protected nature sites contribute £128 million annually to the Welsh economy (DEFRA 2011). Protected nature sites also make a vital contribution to our economic prosperity and are places for scientific research.

Figure LN04: Designated wildlife sites and habitat connectivity in Blaenau Gwent. (NRW 2016b)



Connectivity is important for ecosystems. This is the degree to which wildlife can move in the landscape. This is important if species are to survive and adapt to change. Map 2 shows where connectivity is present. The darker the shading the higher the connectivity for a range of wildlife. This reflects the extent and the diversity of wildlife habitats within the landscapes. A range of habitats in Blaenau Gwent rely on connectivity along the valley sides and rivers. The area is also important for upland wetland and heathland habitats connectivity.

An ecosystem's resilience is also important. This means how well an ecosystem can deal with disturbances, either by resisting them or adapting to them. Resilient ecosystems are able to carry on delivering ecosystem services and benefits despite these disturbances.

Resilience is considered in terms of diversity of species and habitats, their extent, their condition, their connectivity to other similar sites and their ability to adapt to changes, such as climate change. However, many habitats in Wales and Blaenau Gwent are in decline (NRW 2016) and we could lose these eco-services. In Blaenau Gwent, some ecosystems have problems with one or more of these criteria that contribute to resilience. This means that their capacity to provide ecosystems services and benefits may be at risk.

2.3 Interpretation of data

2.3a Woods

There are large areas of woodland in Blaenau Gwent. Much of this is made up of publically owned Welsh Government Woodland Estate.

2.3b Urban

Urban tree cover in Blaenau Gwent is higher than the average for Wales.

Police complaints only demonstrate recorded issues in 2014/2015 and 2015/2016. Caution needs to be taken when making any statements with

regards to 'trends'. It is not possible to make any strong statements of increase or reduction of categories of complaints in the long-term. Furthermore, data does not indicate whether the complaints reflect separate incidents or one incident recorded by several, separate individuals. Future records should be kept in order to truly understand the situation.

2.3b Nature

There are only a small number of recognised nature sites in Blaenau Gwent. However the connectivity is good especially on the upland areas.

2.4 What are the critical issues for public services to consider?

- Create opportunities and improve access to green spaces for the communities of Blaenau Gwent and visitors to the county.
- Improve the urban landscape – reducing anti-social behaviour and creating a healthier, more pleasant and greener environment.
- Provide more opportunities for members of the communities to become involved in nature conservation and habitat restoration.

3. What research exists to help us develop a response to this/ these issues?

3.1 Woodland

Creating opportunities and improving access to forest and woodland spaces will help communities be more active, promote better mental and emotional health. Mind (2013) have shown that there are significant positive associations between mental and physical well-being and increased trees and access to greenspace in urban areas.

3.2 Urban

As mentioned above, trees improve both the mental and physical health of communities (Mind 2013). Lovasi et al (2008) also showed that children living in areas with more street trees have a lower prevalence of asthma.

Trees are among the most versatile and cost-effective natural assets that planners, policy makers, businesses and communities can use to raise the quality of Welsh towns and cities. (NRW 2014)

Sheffield Hallam University (2013) produced a research paper 'Green infrastructure and its contribution to economic growth', which demonstrated the value of green infrastructure to a population's general health and wellbeing. This showed that trees are essential element of our urban environment. They deliver a wide range of benefits to help sustain wildlife promote well-being and support economic benefits by creating more attractive places to live and work.

3.3 Nature

The Conservation Volunteers (TCV) 2014 report highlights the benefits of volunteering. This includes environmental improvement; social interaction; an increase in overall well-being of physical and mental health. The long term benefits recorded were positive impacts on behaviours towards the

environment, as well as a greater willingness to engage in the local community, leading to increased community cohesion and resilience.

4. Five ways of working

4.1 Collaboration

<i>Adds no value</i>	<i>Adds some value</i>	<i>Adds moderate value</i>	<i>Critical to tackle the issue</i>
			X

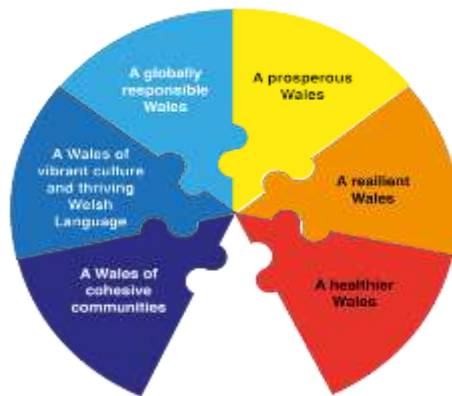
In order to take forward initiatives outlined at 2.4 a partnership between the community and wider PSB partners would be critical to their success.

4.2 a) Integration – links with themes

<i>Economic</i>	<i>Social</i>	<i>Environmental</i>	<i>Cultural</i>
X	X		

Taking forward the work outlined at 2.4 could provide additional benefits to the economic theme e.g. improving the tourism offer and social e.g. health benefits, reducing obesity etc.

4.2b) Integration –Contribution to the National Goal



Supporting Commentary

The landscape and nature of Blaenau Gwent has the potential to have a positive impact on the six of the seven Well-being Goals. Evidence of how this potential can be realised is highlighted throughout this section.

4.3 Thinking to the Long Term

Short term (1-2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Increased enjoyment of an improved urban landscape with better access.</i>
Medium term (2-5 years)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Happier individuals making healthier lifestyle choices.</i>• <i>Improved employment prospects.</i>• <i>Habitats created and nature enhanced.</i>• <i>Improved access to woodland.</i>
Long term (10 years plus)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>A more connected and resilient ecosystem.</i>• <i>Healthier and content individuals.</i>• <i>More cohesive and resilient communities.</i>

4.4 Prevention

A more connected and resilient ecosystem provides better ecosystem services. Investment in this is key as once lost they can be impossible or very expensive to recover.

Healthier individuals require less of the National Health Service and local social services.

More cohesive and resilient communities are more fulfilling places to live and work.

4.5 Involvement

During the 'Blaenau Gwent We Want' Public Engagement Programme the overarching 'Environment' was by far the most popular theme with 822 (21%) individual comments being categorised into it. It was also the most popular theme when we asked what is special about Blaenau Gwent (230 comments, 37%) showing that our environment was seen as an asset to those who took part, particularly our local landscape. However, it was also the most popular theme when we asked what would make Blaenau Gwent a better place (509 comments, 19%), with tidy clean streets and improved waste and recycling service most in need of improvement.

'Tidy clean streets' was the 3rd most popular topic overall with 280 comments (7%), it was also 3rd most popular when we asked what would make Blaenau Gwent a better place (243 comments, 9%). The most common things people said were that the streets needed to be cleaned, with overgrown weeds, litter and dog fouling commonplace. Fly-tipping was also identified as an issue.

The 5th most popular topic with people was our landscape with 183 comments (5%). It was the most popular topic when we asked what is special about Blaenau Gwent (130 comments, 21%) with people saying that the area is surrounded by beautiful scenery with good access to the landscape for all to enjoy.

14 comments were categorised as related to our topic 'wildlife', mostly stating that our local wildlife was an asset to the area that needed protecting.

Those responding in the Sirhowy Valley (4%) were less likely to have an issue with tidy, clean streets than other areas (Upper Ebbw Fach 9%, Ebbw Fawr 10%, Lower Ebbw Fach 12%). Our landscape was seen as very special from respondents throughout the borough.

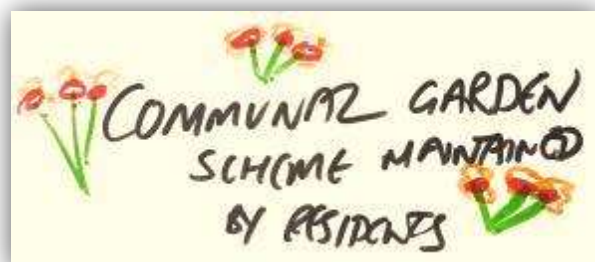
Examples of comments we received:

*"environment better
than the 60's"*

*"beautiful place,
great walking
trails"*

*"what environment?
It's dirty, litter, weeds
everywhere"*

Selection of relevant images from 'Blaenau Gwent We Want' process



5. What is currently being done to tackle this issue?

5.1 Is this issue currently being tackled in partnership?

5.1a Woodland

Blaenau Gwent is currently within the Control Disease Zone (CDZ) for *Phytophthora Ramorum*, a disease affecting larch trees. Larch trees form a high proportion of woodlands in the area and it is currently being removed by Natural Resources Wales (NRW). This provides an opportunity to replant the woodland where appropriate to provide multiple benefits to local communities and nature.

5.1b Urban

Blaenau Gwent's Local Development Plan (LDP) proposes improved access to green space from 65% of the population in Blaenau Gwent who live within 400m of their nearest accessible green space, to 80% by 2021. This will be achieved by creating new, accessible green spaces, enhancing existing green space for biodiversity and removing barriers that prevent current access to natural Green Space. (Blaenau Gwent LDP)

5.1c Nature

We are fortunate that throughout Blaenau Gwent there are a number of groups that have taken a genuine interest and an active role in managing local green space. These act either independently on a specific site, or collectively over a much wider area. This is the case with Ebbw Vale Trail and its partners, which consists of thirteen individual community groups that help manage numerous sites including Beaufort Ponds and Woodlands; Parc NantyWaun; and Roseheyworth Community Woodland.

Such groups have worked with Gwent Wildlife Trust, Groundwork Wales and Keep Wales Tidy. This successful approach has been awarded a number of Green Flags.

There are opportunities for volunteers to gain qualifications such as Agored Cymru's Rivers Restoration Qualification, with experience gained improving job prospects.

5.2 What wider assets could assist in tackling this issue?

5.2a Woodland

The Welsh Government Woodland Estate (WGWE) presents opportunities to improve the community's health and wellbeing, along with opportunities for increased tourism, better biodiversity and water and flood management.

A more coordinated and joined up approach between organisation is needed to tackle the anti-social behaviour. This includes targeting fly-tipping, illegal use by off-road motorcyclists, and arson.

5.2b Urban

Open up and create green spaces and provide suitable access.

Better planning and coordination amongst public services and private sector stakeholders could help tackle anti-social issues and improve the urban environment.

5.2c Nature

The Ebbw Fach approach to countryside management could be further supported and adopted within the Ebbw Fawr and Sirhowy Valleys in a more collaborative, countywide approach.

6. What this tells us about Well-being in Blaenau Gwent

Blaenau Gwent is one of the most wooded county in Wales. Much of this is publically owned. By working together with Blaenau Gwent C.B.C. and Natural Resources Wales, this woodland could be used to improve the physical and mental health of local communities. This can be done be creating woodland walks, bike trails and green gyms.

Access to urban green space could be better. Improving this will help enhance physical and mental health of individuals as well as improve social cohesion. Blaenau Gwent C.B.C should look for sustainable, quick win opportunities. This could include creation of both parks and play areas; improving physical access for all members of the community; planting trees and plants for pollinators.

It is clear anti-social behaviour is occurring in Blaenau Gwent, but the trends are unclear and more data is needed. However, while this is being collected, action is required. A coordinated approach is required between the Council, the Police and other stakeholders. Tackling anti-social behaviour will improve social cohesion and civic pride.

Nature in Blaenau Gwent is under increasing pressure. However, there are community groups whose aims are to improve the environment. Supported by the Council, Natural Resources Wales and other Stakeholders, this template should be rolled out across the county. The groups could provide training and experience leading to improved employment prospects as well as enhancing mental and physical health, and better community cohesion and resilience.

References

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Section 7.2: Hydrology

1. Overview

Water is vital for people, businesses, and agriculture, as well as for nature. However, too much water can be devastating when it leads to flooding, and too little can also be an issue when it causes drought. Both scenarios can affect the well-being of communities of Blaenau Gwent.

Flooding occurs when water arrives in a place quicker than it can drain away. This causes estuaries, rivers, ditches, drains or sewers to overflow, allowing water to flood surrounding houses, businesses, farmland and infrastructure. This water is often from rainfall, but can be from other sources.

Water is supplied to the Blaenau Gwent area by Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water (DCWW). They supply water via a large scale, multi-source, integrated network that is typical of many other water company areas. This Water Resources Zone (WRZ) is known as the South East Wales Conjunctive Use System (SEWCUS).

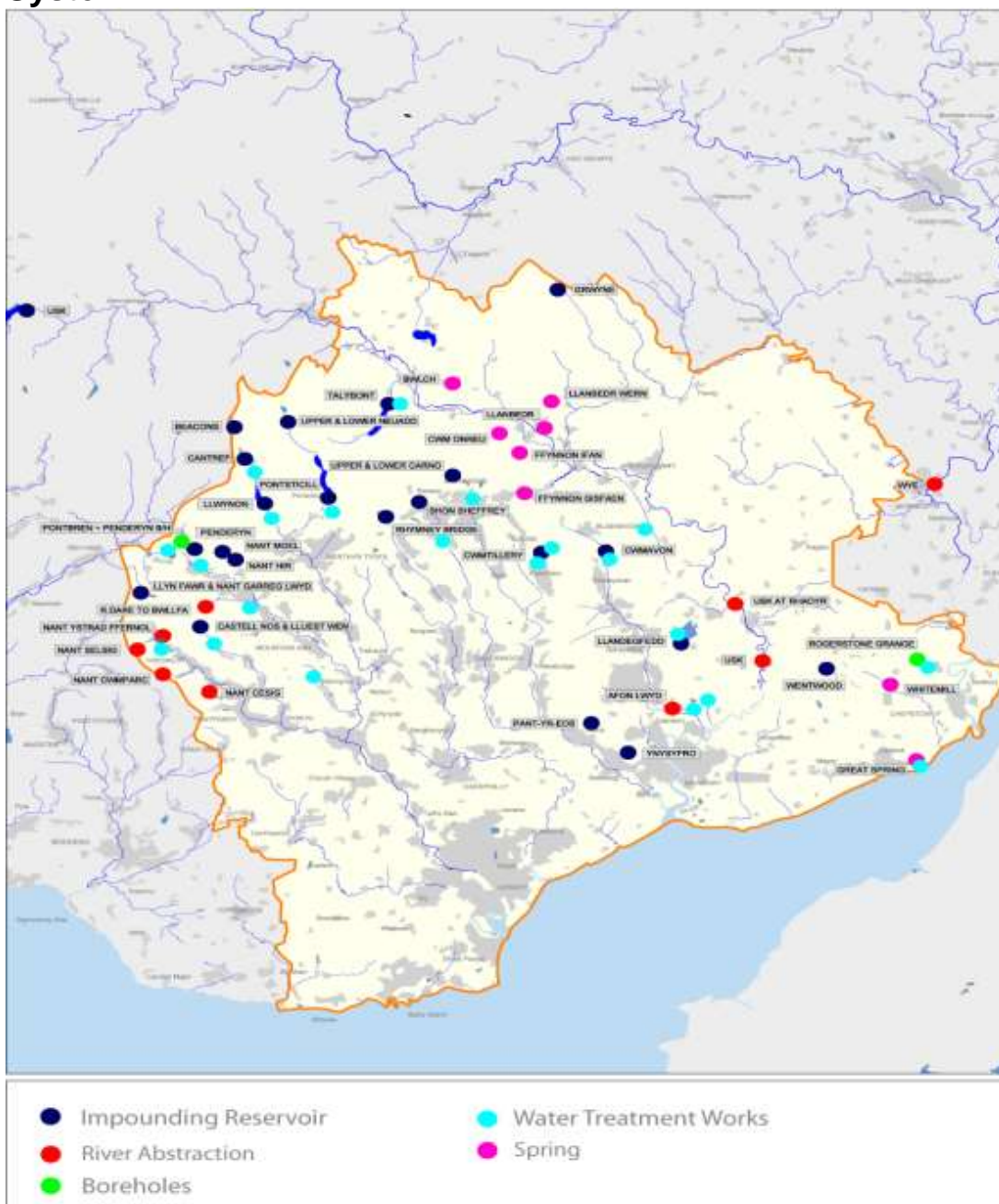
Flooding is the most frequent type of “natural” disaster affecting home and businesses and can disrupt the normal functioning of whole communities. The problem costs the UK billions of pounds every year. However, the consequences of flooding are not just financial.

2. What is the data saying?

2.1 Water supply

In total, there are over 40 resources that are used to supply the SEWCUS WRZ (Figure HY01) which include a mixture of river abstractions from the larger rivers in the east of the WRZ and relatively small upland reservoir sources with small catchment areas.

Figure HY01: Water Resources in South East Wales Conjointive Use System



Blaenau Gwent's water supply is primarily from the three small reservoirs - Shon Sheffery and Upper & Lower Carno

As the SEWCUS WRZ is an integrated network, supplies from abstractions from the Rivers Wye and Usk can be transferred to relieve the demand on the smaller upland impounding reservoirs in Blaenau Gwent whose storage declines relatively quickly in dry weather. This preserves the storage in the smaller sources and allows them to supply their immediate demand areas through an extended drought.

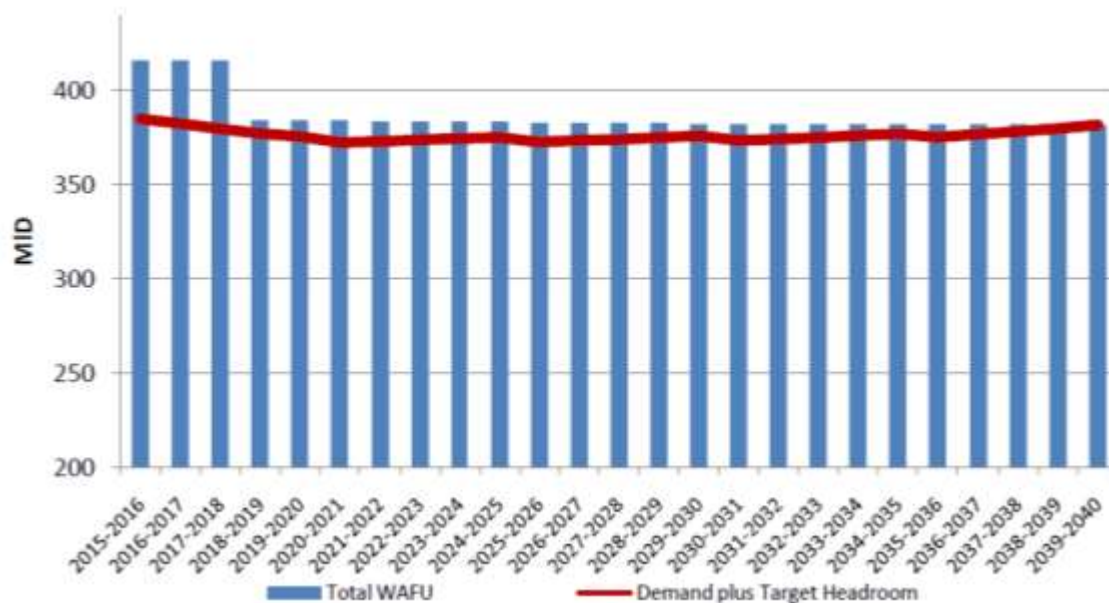
Whilst making this water is available to Blaenau Gwent, to overcome any deficit, the water is abstracted and pumped from the River Usk/Wye. This uses a lot of energy and is not wholly sustainable over the long-term. As a result this issue needs to be addressed.

To safeguard supply, water companies in England & Wales have a statutory duty (as set out in in Section 37A-37D of the Water Industry Act 1991) to produce a water resources management plan (WRMP) every five years. The plan must set out how a water company intends to maintain the balance between supply and demand for water over a 25 year period, while protecting the environment.

A WRMP is complemented by a water company drought plan, which sets out the short-term operational steps they will take as a drought progresses to enhance available supplies, manage customer demand and minimise environmental impacts.

The WRMP's annual average planning scenario remains in surplus throughout the current planning period until 2039 as shown in Figure HY02 below.

Figure HY02: SEWCUS Annual Average Supply Demand Balance Position 2015 -2040.



N.B. There is a reduction in Total Water Available for Use (WAFU) in 2018 due to changes to abstraction licences brought about by the Habitats Directive.

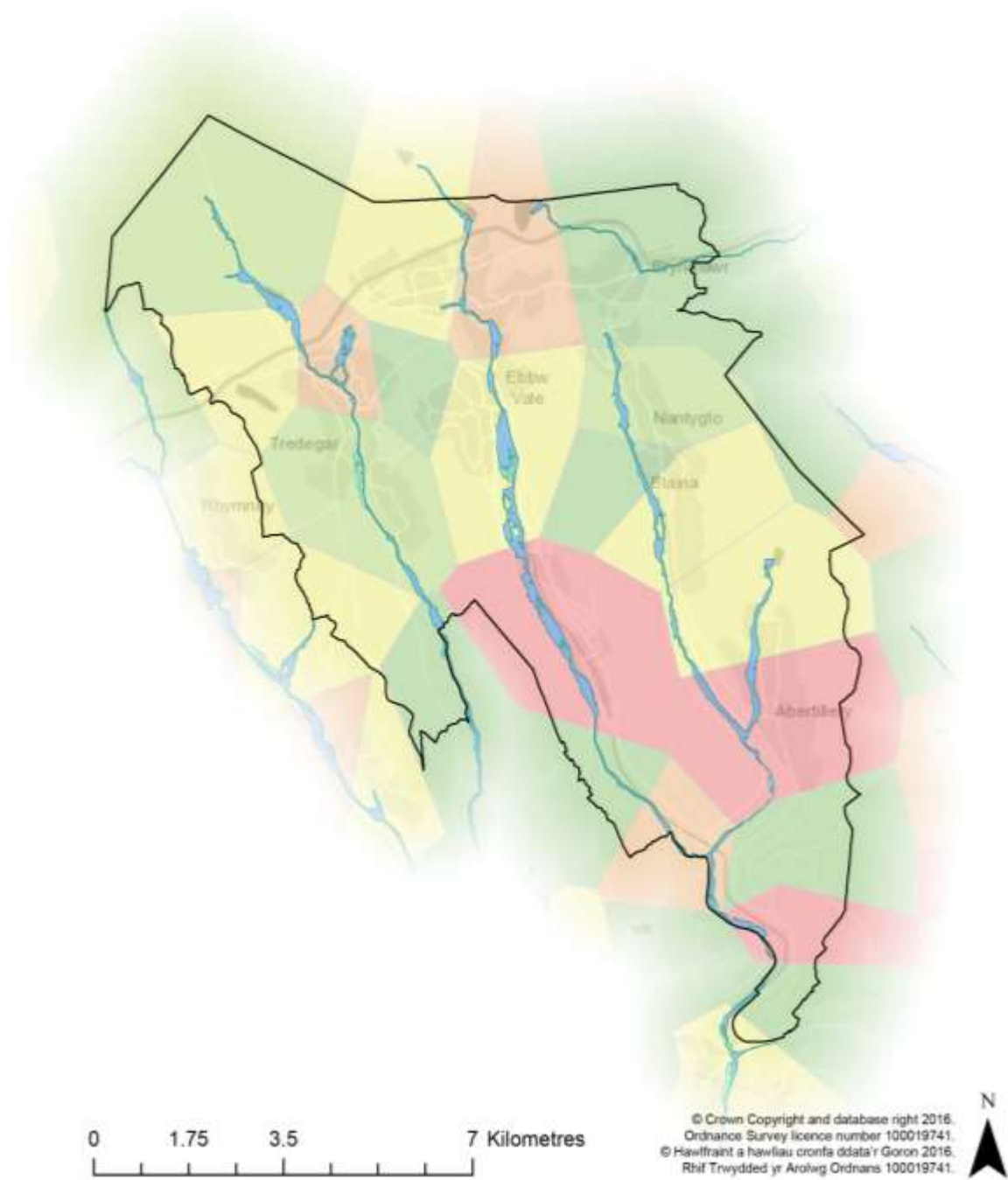
Source: Dwr Cymru Welsh Water, 2014

2.2 Flooding

Even modest flooding events can significantly impact on the physical and mental well-being of the individuals affected for many years after the actual flooding event. From a well-being perspective, quite often the worst affected are the more vulnerable in society.

Figure HY03 shows the likely severity of river flooding should it occur. This is a “traffic light” method where ‘green’ is low risk and ‘red’ is high risk. The severity is based on the number of properties within the community likely to be affected. Figure HY03 shows that the communities in Blaenau Gwent most at risk from flooding are Llanhilleth, Abertillery and Cwm. The communities of Victoria, Waun Lwyd, Dukestown and Aberbeeg are also at risk.

Figure HY03: Flood risk in Blaenau Gwent



Source: Natural Resources Wales 2016

2.3 Interpretation of data

2.3a Water supply

Figure HY02 shows that there is a decreasing surplus from 7.04 million litres per day in 2018/19, with a maximum surplus of 11.36 MI/d in 2020/21, and from this point a general decreasing trend until reaching its only deficit year of 0.51 MI/d in 2039/40.

Should an incident occur which causes a major disruption to water supply, Multi Agency arrangements are in place for water distribution. This is led by Welsh Water, and supported by other responders.

2.3 b Flooding

The blue shading on Figure HY03 shows the different flood risk level **if there were no flood defences**. These are:

- Flood Zone 3 – High Probability of flooding. Land assessed as having a greater than 1% probability of flooding in any year. Area shown in darker blue.
- Flood Zone 2 – Medium probability of flooding - 1% – 0.1% in any year. Area shown in lighter blue.
- Flood Zone 1 – Low probability of flooding. In these areas there is less than a 0.1 per cent (1 in 1000) chance of flooding occurring each year. The majority of Blaenau Gwent falls within this area and are unlikely to be flooded by rivers and extremely unlikely to be flooded by the sea. These are the areas of the map without blue shading.

When talking about flooding risk, it is always done in terms of no defences being present. This is because defences are not 100% reliable and therefore not included.

2.4 What are the critical issues for public services to consider?

Due to climate change, winter rainfall in Wales is projected to increase [Adapting to climate change UK Climate Projections, DEFRA (2009)]. The threat of flooding will therefore continue to be a key issue for many communities. However, increased resilience within the natural environment and well planned developments can help provide resilience to flooding.

Conversely a lack of water (drought) could be a consequence for the area as a result of climate change and increased global usage, we therefore need to ensure a sustainable supply of water.

Sources of flooding are groundwater, fluvial (river), and pluvial (rain). This authority is not affected by coastal flooding due to its location.

Maintaining the water quality within the catchment area, ensuring that we manage and monitor any potential sources of pollution is a critical issue for the public service to address.

3. What research exists to help us develop a response to this/ these issues?

Natural Resources Wales currently has no plan to construct any new flood defences in Blaenau Gwent. However, they are currently carrying out flood modelling in Cwm and this will determine any work required.

Whilst no new defences are planned, there is an on-going maintenance work program where defence are repaired to ensure suitability. Work of this nature has recently been carried out on the defences in Aberbeeg.

Further research will be conducted dependant on priority setting by the Public Service Board.

4. Five ways of working

4.1 Collaboration

Collaboration with partners- NRW, Rivers Trust, Keep Wales Tidy, Groundworks Trust, Gwent Wildlife Trust and Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water is key to addressing the critical issues identified above, namely flooding, water quality and water supply.

<i>Adds no value</i>	<i>Adds some value</i>	<i>Adds moderate value</i>	<i>Critical to tackle the issue</i>
			X

4.2 a) Integration – links with themes

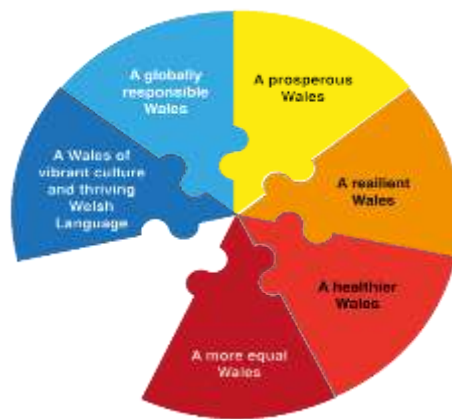
<i>Economic</i>	<i>Social</i>	<i>Environmental</i>	<i>Cultural</i>
X	X		X

Economic – links to all industry, all water related demand and supply.

Social - strong interaction with the local community and impact of flooding on our local communities and residents.

Cultural – strong cultural link due to the history of the Valleys in terms of topography, rivers and geology.

4.2b) Integration –Contribution to the National Goal



Supporting Commentary

Prosperous –availability of clean and adequate supply of water is essential for a vibrant economy.

Resilient - without efficient management of our water supplies resilience would be weakened.

Healthier- A communities health is intrinsically linked to water supply. Clean adequate water supply and management is directly proportional to the health of a given community.

Equal- All of our communities benefit from good water management

Culture & Language- The story of the Valleys is built on the geology and hydrology of the area

Globally Responsible- Sustainable hydrological management at a local level has global consequences.

4.3 Thinking to the Long Term

Consider the known / likely / potential impact on well-being in the short, medium and long term.

Short term (1-2)	<i>Significant</i>
Medium term (2-5 years)	<i>Highly significant</i>
Long term (10 years plus)	<i>Major significant</i>

4.4 Prevention

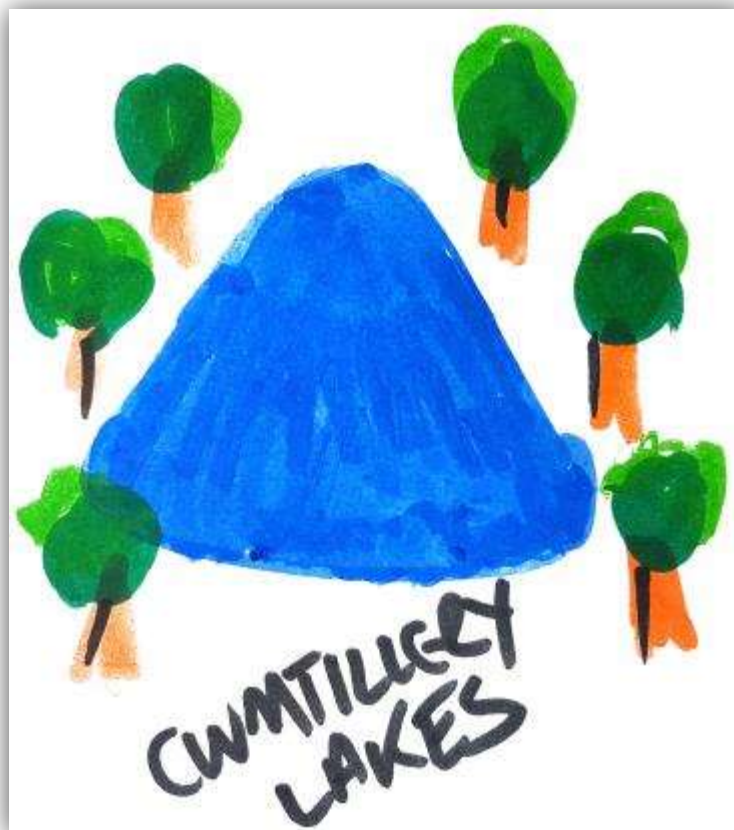
This is an estimation of impact of preventative action on this well-being measure. This will include an assessment of the cause and effect of an issue; how issues if focussed upon can prevent problems from occurring or getting worse. The benefits of preventative spend and how innovative preventative approaches could be developed.

The Blaenau Gwent Flood Risk Management Plan (FRMP) identifies a series of actions specifically designed to help with the risk of flooding, including physical defensive assets, natural flood defence systems and flood attenuation management

4.5 Involvement

During the 'Blaenau Gwent We Want' Public Engagement Programme we received just 3 comments that were directly related to hydrology; all about how flooding issues within the area needed to be improved.

Selection of relevant images from 'Blaenau Gwent We Want' process



5. What is currently being done to tackle this issue?

Flooding

As part of our Flood Risk Management Plan (FRMP) the Council's web site gives advice relating to flooding and resilience, and recovery from flooding in an effort to make people more aware of flooding within the area.

The main cause of individual flood events in Blaenau Gwent are associated with blocked grids on either highways gullies or culvert inlet grids. These can be very susceptible to blockage during the autumn months due to sudden high levels of leaf fall combined with winds and heavy rainfall. Although there are maintenance plans in place to clear the more significant inlets at regular intervals, the local authority cannot constantly monitor every grid or inlet throughout the borough. Therefore, one of the objectives highlighted in our FRMP include raising awareness of and engaging people in the response to flood risk. Other objectives include "Providing an effective and sustained response" and "Prioritising investment in the most at risk communities" to reduce the consequences for individuals, communities, businesses and the environment from flooding.

NRW are responsible for dealing with flooding from main rivers, and the owners of public sewers are responsible for any associated flooding, which is often Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water. Flooding from public sewers can often be caused by overloading of combined systems which would contain foul sewage. For this reason this type of flooding is often more serious especially when internal flooding occurs. Blaenau Gwent Council has cooperated with Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water to share information and wherever possible remove surface water from public sewers to ordinary watercourses to increase capacity in combined public sewers to reduce occasions of foul water flooding.

Water supply

To overcome any deficit for the Blaenau Gwent area, water is abstracted and pumped from the River Usk and Wye. This uses a lot of energy and is not wholly sustainable over the long-term. As a result this issue needs to be addressed.

5.1 Is this issue currently being tackled in partnership?

Partnership work is in place through the Local Resilience Forum where flood risk is considered and response arrangements are developed.

5.2 What wider assets could assist in tackling this issue?

Wider assets that could be used to tackle the issue will be explored through further response analysis work dependant on priority setting of the PSB.

6. What this tells us about Well-being in Blaenau Gwent

Providing a sufficient supply of water is vital to people, business and also nature. There has been a long-term steady decline in overall water demand in South Wales. This is primarily due to the decline of heavy industry and the significant reduction in leakage from the pipe networks over the past fifteen years.

Despite the general perception that Wales has an abundant supply of water, future water supply strategy in Blaenau Gwent faces a number of challenges, including the abstraction license reductions and the impacts of a predicted reduction in summer rainfall due to climate change (DEFRA, 2009).

Arrangements are in place at an operational level to respond to flooding incidents. Blaenau Gwent council have a limited number of staff to respond to minor flood instances. However, at times of prolonged heavy rain and multiple instances of flooding, the authority cannot guarantee they will be able to respond immediately to all instances of flooding. For this reason Blaenau Gwent Council are promoting flood awareness and resilience throughout the authority through its web site. These are complemented by Multi Agency flood response plans for larger flooding incidents, and also for associated issues such as evacuation, warning and informing.

Too much water can have devastating effects on the well-being of local communities. As such we need to ensure that flooding is avoided and where it does happen communities are supported to get back on their feet as quickly as possible, ensuring lessons are identified and any necessary improvements are made.

Community resilience is about communities using local resources and knowledge to help themselves during an emergency in a way that complements the local emergency services. A Community Flood Group, instigated by Natural Resources Wales as part of their community resilience

work, is active in Cwm. Historically, there are barriers to communities getting involved in community resilience projects due to a lack of interest and few major incidents (such as flooding) which would encourage self-help.

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Gwent Local Resilience Forum

<http://www.gwentprepared.org.uk/>

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Flood Risk Management Plan
September 2015

Section 7.3: Air, Water, Noise & Soil Quality

1. Overview

This report will seek to describe the current situation with regard to air, water noise and soil within the Blaenau Gwent area and the implication and benefits for its residents.

Ecosystems can help purify air, water and soil. Of particular relevance to health in Wales is air quality, which has a direct impact on people's life expectancy.

In the UK, two air pollutants (particulate matter and nitrogen dioxide) contribute to the early deaths of between 40,000 and 50,000 people annually.

Furthermore, the costs of poor air quality in terms of health impacts add up to £20 billion a year. A report by Public Health estimates that the proportion of deaths in Wales due to long term exposure to man-made particulate air pollution (PM2.5) is 4.3%. Poor air quality has not only a direct impact on health but can also discourage people from venturing outdoors, which in turn contributes to more sedentary lifestyles.

Our rivers, lakes, estuaries, coastline and beaches provide us with important natural benefits, many of which contribute to the well-being of local communities and the wider population.

These natural benefits include supply of clean drinking water, waterbodies for recreation, exercise and relaxation. They also provide opportunities for income generation for businesses and tourism, as well as green energy production.

Soils are an irreplaceable natural resource, helping to shape the landscape, provide the platform for built development, acting as a growing medium for our food, timber and other crops. Soils store vast quantities of water and carbon and they can buffer and transform chemicals that could otherwise cause water

or air pollution and/or contaminate our food. Soils also contain an essential component of our biodiversity and support and/or influence all our ecosystems.

Impacts of noise, which can be defined as unwanted or harmful sound, can lead to sleep or relaxation disturbance and annoyance. Consistent exposure to noise can even lead to hypertension and increased risk of heart disease. High noise levels found in some workplaces and music venues can cause temporary and permanent hearing damage.

Councils have a statutory duty to investigate noise complaints and where justified to take appropriate action. In Blaenau Gwent the highest number of complaints are about barking dogs and loud music (in 2015/16 there were 113 and 80 respectively).

Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, places a statutory duty on local authorities to “cause its area to be inspected from time to time for the purposes of identifying contaminated land”. Since 2002 the Authority has been proactively identifying historic contaminated land sites and where necessary remediating them to ensure they are safe for their current use.

2. What is the data saying?

2.1 At a Blaenau Gwent level

2.1a Local Air Quality

The UK's National Air Quality Strategy sets air quality objectives for seven key pollutants which local authorities are legally required to have regard to. These include: Benzene; 1, 3-Butadiene; Carbon Monoxide; Lead; Nitrogen Dioxide; Particulate Matter (PM₁₀) (gravimetric); and Sulphur Dioxide. Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 requires local authorities to produce annual air quality reports as part of this National Strategy and these reports have been produced for Blaenau Gwent since 2004.

The reports look at local air monitoring data and sources of air pollution within the area to assess the likelihood of any of the National Air Quality Objectives being exceeded. Typical significant sources of air pollution include road traffic and industrial facilities. Within Blaenau Gwent a network of passive Nitrogen Dioxide monitoring diffusion tubes are utilised to provide an indicator of local air quality. Since the establishment of this network no exceedances of the air quality objective for Nitrogen Dioxide have been detected and the levels of Nitrogen Dioxide typically recorded are less than 50% of the national air quality standard, indicating that the air quality in Blaenau Gwent is good.

Assessments of the sources of atmospheric emissions within the area indicate that none of the standards set out for the other pollutants in the National Air Quality Strategy are currently likely to be exceeded.

2.1b Local Water Quality

In recent decades the quality of the water of the rivers in Blaenau Gwent has improved. This is in most part due to the decline in heavy industry, but also through the improvements to waste water treatment.

By working to continually improve and maintain the quality of these water assets in the area we can deliver benefits for the environment, the economy, and health and quality of life of local communities.

The quality and quantity of water in our environment is currently measured against classifications of the Water Framework Directive. This directive requires the water of our rivers and lakes to be assessed by monitoring the ecology (fish, invertebrates, plants etc.) and chemicals (nutrients, pesticides, etc.).

2.1c Noise Quality

Figure Q01 gives a breakdown of the number of noise complaints received by the local authority annually. There has been a 25% reduction in the number of complaints received between the years 2012 and 2016.

Figure Q01: Noise Complaints

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Total Noise Complaints	408	370	372	317

Source: Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

Road traffic noise is the most common form of noise, affecting people living close to busy roads. The Environmental Noise Directive 2002 requires member states to focus on:

- determination of exposure to environmental noise
- ensuring that information on environmental noise and its effects is made available to the public
- preventing and reducing environmental noise where necessary and preserving environmental noise quality where it is good

The Welsh Government is responsible for implementing the directive and has worked with stakeholders to develop 'A Noise Action Plan for Wales'. As part of this plan, noise mapping was undertaken to identify areas within Blaenau

Gwent which, because of possible elevated noise levels from road traffic, had the potential to trigger the need to develop “Noise Action Priority Planning Areas”. These areas would require the Local Authority to look at measures to reduce noise impacts at sensitive receptors. Detailed analysis of the noise mapping data has shown that no areas of the Borough exceed the threshold noise value which would require the declaration of “Noise Action Priority Planning Areas”.

2.1d Contaminated land

In order to assist in discharging duties associated to contaminated land, Blaenau Gwent Council produced a contaminated land strategy in 2002, setting out it how it will identify and where necessary remediate contaminated land which presents:

- Significant harm to people, property or protected species;
- Significant pollution of controlled waters; and
- Harm to people as a result of radioactivity.

Blaenau Gwent has a long history of heavy industry including coal and mineral extraction and iron and steel manufacture. These industries were spread throughout the area and as a result there is likely to be a widespread dispersion of the contaminants associated with this sector of manufacturing. Through the study of historical plans the Authority has created a priority list of potential sites where by the presence of a source-pathway- receptor link, there is likely to be contaminated land as defined by the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

It continues to respond to complaints about potential land contamination and deals with problematic contaminated sites through the provisions of Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 as appropriate. In addition to this, the Authority also deals with potential ground contamination through the Planning

system. By assessing planning applications against former historical land uses on a site specific basis, the Authority can impose planning conditions where appropriate to ensure sites are investigated for contamination and remediated where necessary so that land is suitable for the proposed end use.

2.1e Soil Quality/Peatland

Peatland habitats help regulate our climate and the water cycle, both of which are fundamental to wellbeing. Deep peat soils are important for mitigating climate change as they take up and store atmospheric carbon.

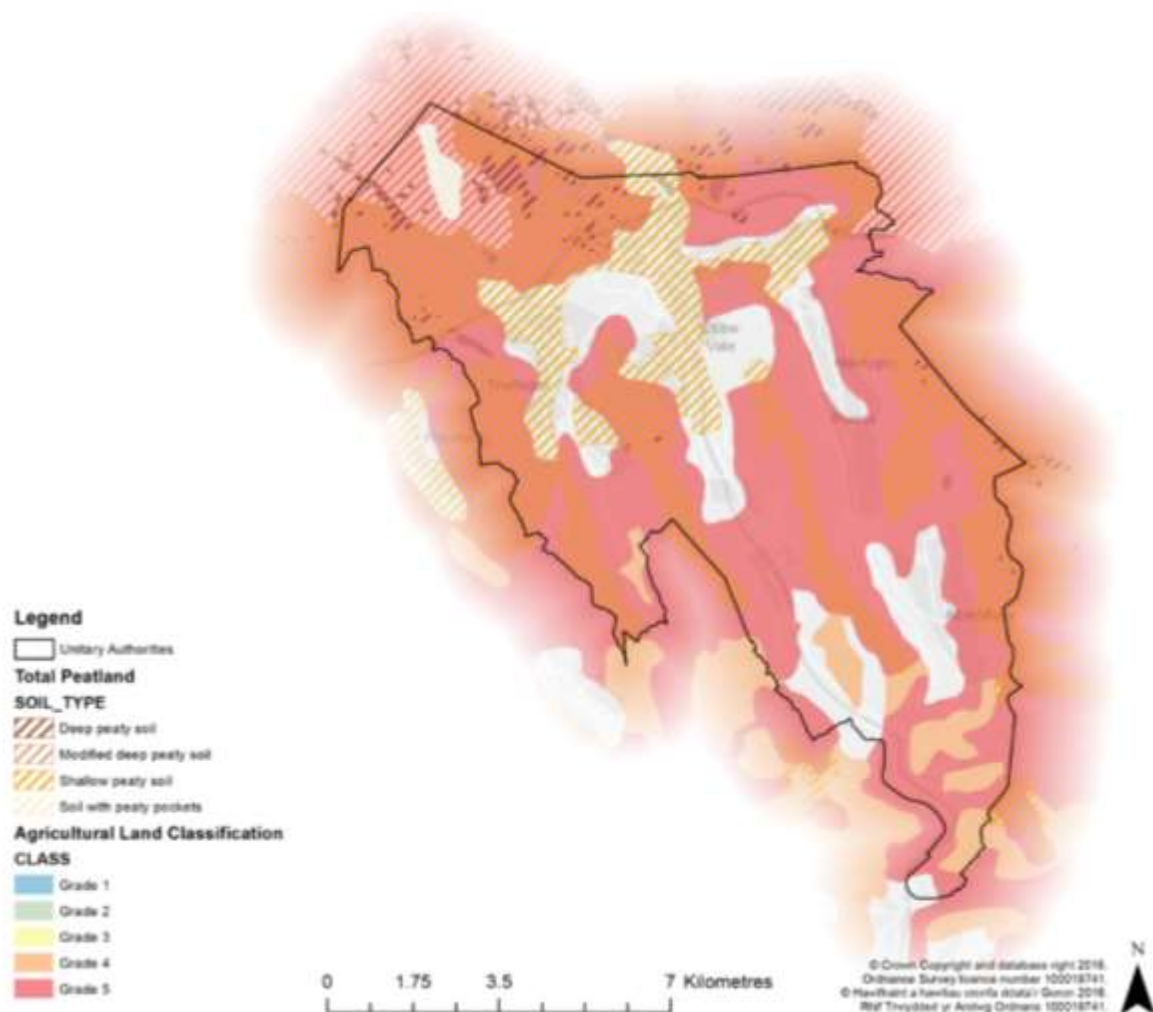
Peatland habitats can play an important role in water management, slowing down flood waters and naturally reducing flood-risk downstream. By slowly releasing water during dry periods, peatland helps to reduce the impact of droughts on water supplies and on river and stream flows.

Peat in good condition supports clean, well-functioning river systems underpinning good environmental quality. They also provide wild, but accessible space for recreation.

Figure Q02 shows that almost all of the peat resource of Blaenau Gwent occurs in the uplands and north of the A465, with small pockets between the Rhymney & Sirhowy Valleys. Small areas of peatland are in the Mynydd Llangynidr SSSI.

Development is likely to have resulted in loss of peat in the past, and a significant area of peat will be affected if the [Circuit of Wales](#) proposal goes ahead.

Figure Q02: Peatland in Blaenau Gwent



Source: Natural Resources Wales, 2016

Wet peat soils are unlikely to have been recognised or valued in the area, leading to inappropriate management for at least some of the sites. The occurrence of peat within large unenclosed upland blocks hampers focussed management.

Restoring peat can bring benefits to people, the environment, and contribute to climate change resilience, by storing and regulating the flow of water, improving water quality, and storing carbon.

Semi-natural peatland vegetation in good condition delivers the widest range of ecosystem services. Restoring all areas of peatland in Wales with semi-

natural vegetation is a Welsh Government priority and so these are a priority for joint action wherever they occur.

Deep peat soils (peat soils over 50cm deep) occur throughout Wales and are one of our critical natural assets. Peat supports the largest amount of soil carbon per unit area of any soils and when in good condition in mires (wetlands) play a very important role in climate change by locking up carbon from the atmosphere.

The characteristic habitats, plant and animal species associated with peatlands are a key feature of Wales's biodiversity and all public bodies have a duty to enhance and maintain them. Peatlands in good condition help sustain rivers and streams during dry periods; help retain or slow-down runoff and in doing so form part of our range of natural flood risk management assets. Peatlands contribute to the character and landscape quality of Wales, providing wild, but accessible places for people and nature.

2.1f Agriculture

There are approximately 300 farming businesses within Blaenau Gwent of which the predominant type is hill farming. Sheep are mainly grazed on the uplands on commons and, if grazed, cattle usually comprise of less than one third of the livestock units. These are raised for beef.

Smaller commons tend to have a mix of farm types with more part time operations, while the larger commons tend to support larger full time farms. A variety of land management tasks are carried out on the commons, with widespread participation in [Glastir Commons](#). This is a Welsh Government scheme which plays a key role in the management of habitats and the landscape by offering financial support to farmers and land managers.

2.2 At a neighbourhood area level

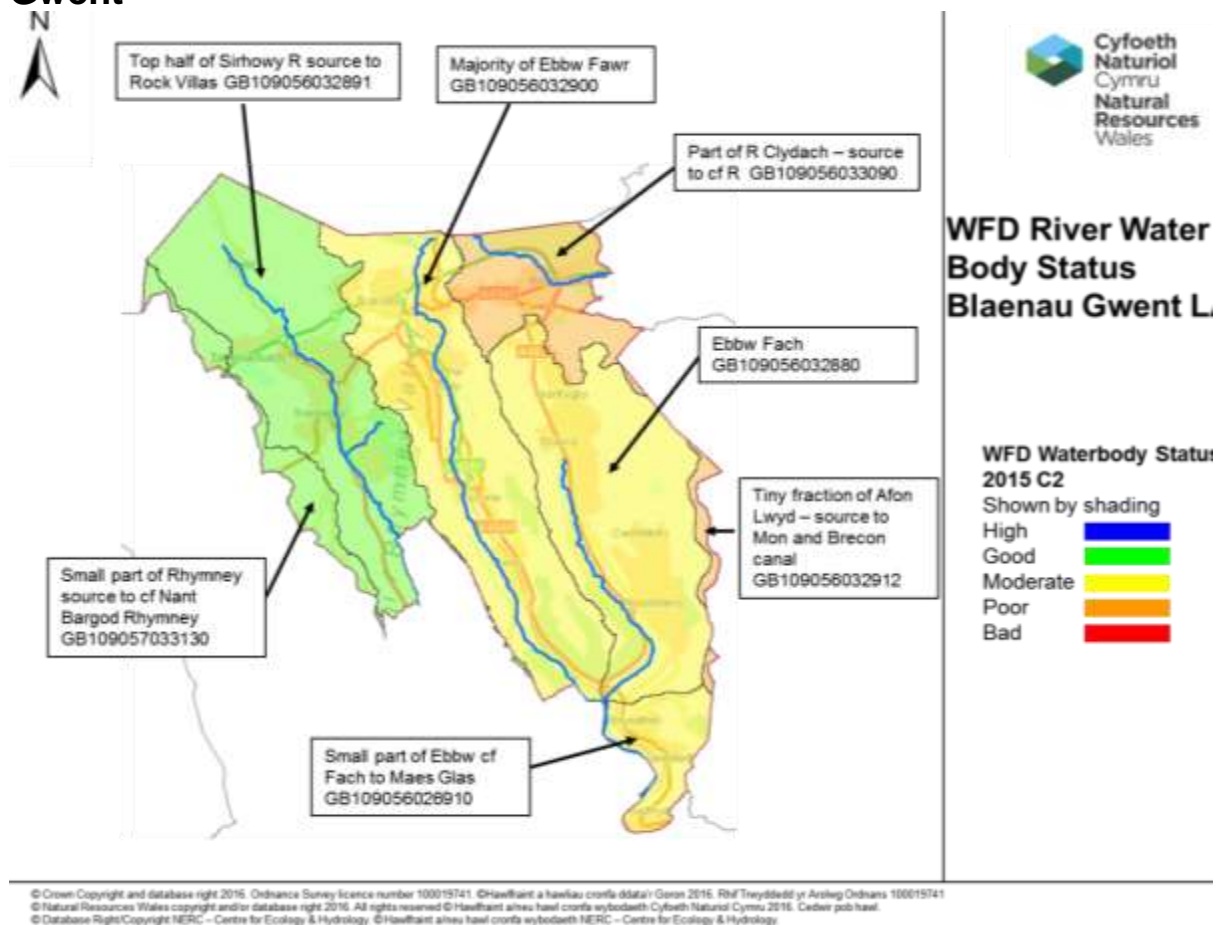
2.2 a) Air quality

The local authority has a network of 21 nitrogen dioxide passive monitoring diffusion tubes which provide monthly background concentration values of this gas throughout the Borough. Nitrogen Dioxide is one of seven key pollutants that the authority has to consider as part of its Air Quality Objectives and is an important indicator in relation to air quality generally. No exceedances of the national air quality objective concentration values for nitrogen dioxide have been detected in the Borough since monitoring began in 2003. [Air quality assessments and reviews](#) are carried out annually by the Blaenau Gwent Council.

2.2 b) Water quality

Our waterbodies are assigned a status of health which is represented by colours in Figure Q03. Water bodies, that are classified as 'Bad', 'Poor' or 'Moderate' are failing the EU Water Framework Directive standards and these waterbodies will need to improve to at least 'Good' ecological status by 2027. In Blaenau Gwent, there are waterbodies classified as Good. However, most are 'Moderate' or 'Poor'. None are 'Bad'.

Figure Q03: Water Framework Directive status of rivers in Blaenau Gwent



Source: Natural Resources Wales (NRW) 2016

Where rivers are failing for fish this is primarily down to three causes: physical modification to the waterbody; the quality of the aquatic water habitat; and water quality. Figure Q04 shows the failing elements of watercourse in Blaenau Gwent.

Figure Q04: WFD classification with failing elements of watercourses in Blaenau Gwent (NRW 2016)

Watercourse as shown in Fig Q03	WFD Classification	Failing Element
River Sirhowy	Good	Not applicable
River Ebbw Fawr	Moderate	-Fish (salmon) -Phosphate
River Clydach	Poor	-Fish (eel & bullhead) -Phosphate
River Ebbw Fach	Moderate	-Fish (salmon) -Invertebrates
River Afon Lwyd	Poor	-Fish (salmon & bullhead) -Manganese
River Ebbw	Moderate	-Mitigation Measures Assessment -Tributyltin -Water Resources
River Rhymney	Good	Not applicable

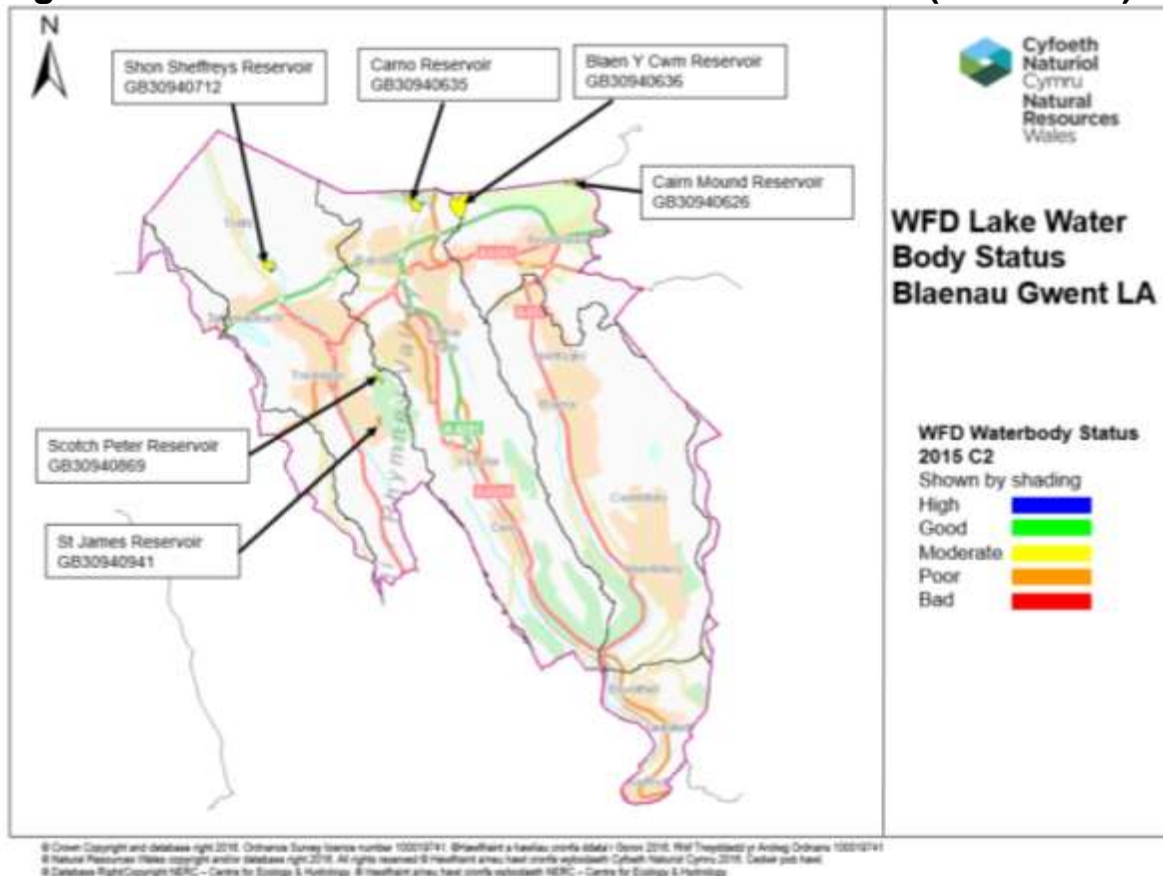
Source: *Natural Resources Wales (NRW) 2016*

Physical modifications such as man-made weirs are present due to industrialisation and urbanisation. They present barriers that prevent fish from migrating upstream to their spawning grounds. The pressure on fish and the wider ecology is increased by degraded habitat such as poor quality spawning grounds. Phosphorus from sewage discharges and misconnections of pipes from residential and industrial estates also impacts on the fish.

The Phosphorus issue on the River Clydach is being address by Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water with the upgrading of the waste water treatment works at Brynmawr. On the River Afon Lywd the manganese is found because of historical mines discharging into rivers. The source of the tributyltin in the River Ebbw is unknown. Whilst the water resources issue is the Newport Dock feeder abstraction at Bassleg Weir, further downstream.

Figure Q05 shows the lakes listed as reservoirs which are important for water supply in Blaenau Gwent.

Figure Q05: WFD status of lakes in Blaenau Gwent. (NRW 2016)



Source: Natural Resources Wales (NRW) 2016

Figure Q06 shows that the six reservoirs in Blaenau Gwent are classed as moderate, and are primarily failing because they are artificial/heavily modified waterbodies.

Figure Q06: WFD classification with failing elements of lakes in Blaenau Gwent

Waterbody as shown in Fig Q03	WFD Classification	Failing Element
Shon Shefferys Reservoir	Moderate	Mitigation Measure Assessment Phosphorus Macrophytes
Carno Reservoir	Moderate	Mitigation Measure Assessment Phosphorus
Blaen y Cwm Reservoir	Moderate	Mitigation Measure Assessment Phosphorus
Cain Mound Reservoir	Moderate	Mitigation Measure Assessment Expert Judgement – At risk from Acidification, Phosphorus & Hydro morphology
St James Reservoir	Moderate	Mitigation Measure Assessment Expert Judgement – At risk from Acidification, Phosphorus & Hydro morphology
Scotch Peter Reservoir	Moderate	Mitigation Measure Assessment

Source: Natural Resources Wales (NRW) 2016

2.3 Interpretation of data

The lakes listed are all reservoirs and are important for water supply in Blaenau Gwent. They are primarily failing because they are artificial/heavily modified waterbodies.

2.4 What are the critical issues for public services to consider?

Mitigation measures need to be implemented to achieve “Good Ecological Potential” (as opposed to Good Ecological ‘Status’). These measures include resolving water quality issues (dissolved oxygen, sediment, etc.), and barriers

to migration such as dams and weirs. They also look to ensure adequate compensation flow to downstream watercourses.

3. What research exists to help us develop a response to this/these issues?

The Tawe catchment, Wrexham and Bridgend i-Tree Eco studies have measured the contribution their urban trees make to capturing particulate pollution. Every year across these towns, 257 tonnes of pollutants are removed by trees, of which 30.5 tonnes is PM10 and 20.5 tonnes is PM2.5. The United Kingdom Social Damage Cost (UKSDC) valuation of removing 30.5 tonnes of PM10, using the higher 'transport urban medium' health effects do not relate solely to the direct impacts of air pollution. Actions such as promoting the use of non-motorised means of transport as a means of reducing local emissions of pollutants can help people to become more active, improving their health and fitness. In turn, this may also help individuals to become more resilient to the direct ill-effects of air pollution. Similarly, measures to mitigate climate change have health knock-on benefits. For example, measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transport can deliver improvements in air quality.

Natural resources and ecosystems can play a role in reducing the impacts of poor air quality. The role of trees in contributing to cleaner and healthier air is highlighted in a study by Lancaster University. This benefit can be maximised by carefully designed tree planting along transport corridors. The Lancaster study also highlights which species are best suited to particulate removal; identifying ash, alder, maple, pine and birch.

4. Five ways of working

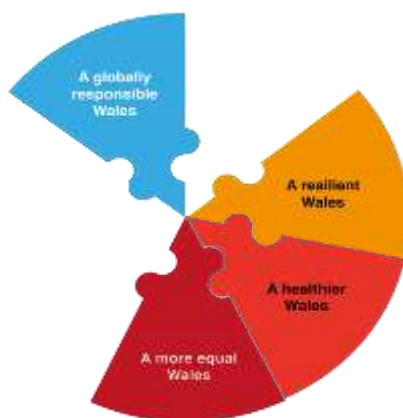
4.1 Collaboration

<i>Adds no value</i>	<i>Adds some value</i>	<i>Adds moderate value</i>	<i>Critical to tackle the issue</i>
		X	

4.2 a) Integration – links with themes

<i>Economic</i>	<i>Social</i>	<i>Environmental</i>	<i>Cultural</i>
	X		

4.2b) Integration –Contribution to the National Goal



Supporting Commentary

The quality of air, water, noise and soil quality are paramount in ensuring a resilient Wales.

The quality of air, water, noise and soil quality have a fundamental effect on the well-being of people in Blaenau Gwent.

Equality of opportunity is important for access to clean air and water quality.

Blaenau Gwent needs to ensure the preserve the natural resources of air, water and soil as part of the wider global responsibilities to the environment.

4.3 Thinking to the Long Term

Short term (1-2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Increased enjoyment of an improved urban landscape with better access.</i>• <i>Safe Access</i>• <i>Environmentally sustainable environments</i>• <i>Cohesive communities</i>
Medium term (2-5 years)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Happier individuals making healthier lifestyle choices.</i>• <i>Improved employment prospects.</i>• <i>Habitats created and nature enhanced.</i>• <i>Improved access to open space</i>• <i>Improved access and enjoyment of water environments</i>
Long term (10 years plus)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>A more connected and resilient ecosystem.</i>• <i>Healthier and content individuals.</i>• <i>More cohesive and resilient communities.</i>

4.4 Prevention

If identified as a PSB priority further work will be undertaken as part of our response analysis to fully understand the existing gaps that need to be addressed in partnership. This will as part of our Logic approach identify costs and benefits of any proposed solutions.

4.5 Involvement

During the 'Blaenau Gwent We Want' Public Engagement Programme there were no specific comments from residents about air, water, and soil quality in Blaenau Gwent. However, our theme 'Environment' was by far the most popular theme overall with 822 (21%) individual comments being categorised into it showing how important a good quality environment was to our residents.

See [Landscapes and Nature](#) for more information.

5. What is currently being done to tackle this issue?

5.1 Is this issue currently being tackled in partnership?

Natural Resources Wales is currently working with Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water to implement these measures.

5.2 What wider assets could assist in tackling this issue?

Wider assets that could be used to tackle the issue will be explored through further response analysis work dependant on priority setting of the PSB.

6. What this tells us about Well-being in Blaenau Gwent

A continued, sustained effort is needed to ensure that the waterbodies of Blaenau Gwent achieve 'Good' ecological status.

The quality of water discharged into waterbodies need to be improved, habitats for wildlife need to be enhanced and created.

This will also create a pleasant environment for the enjoyment of local residents, as well as attract visitors, including people who fish.

There are opportunities for communities to become involved in improving their local watercourse by taking part in litter picks, habitat creation and enhancement, as well as reporting pollution incidents.

These opportunities to volunteer can be informal, organised events, or formal on-going opportunities, possibly with formal qualifications.

Section 7.4: Carbon & Ecological Footprint

1. Overview

The carbon footprint is the total amount of greenhouse gases produced to directly and indirectly support human activities, in particular the production of goods and services such as food, housing, travel, consumer items, private and public services and construction. The carbon footprint describes the physical quantity of greenhouse gases emitted to the atmosphere.

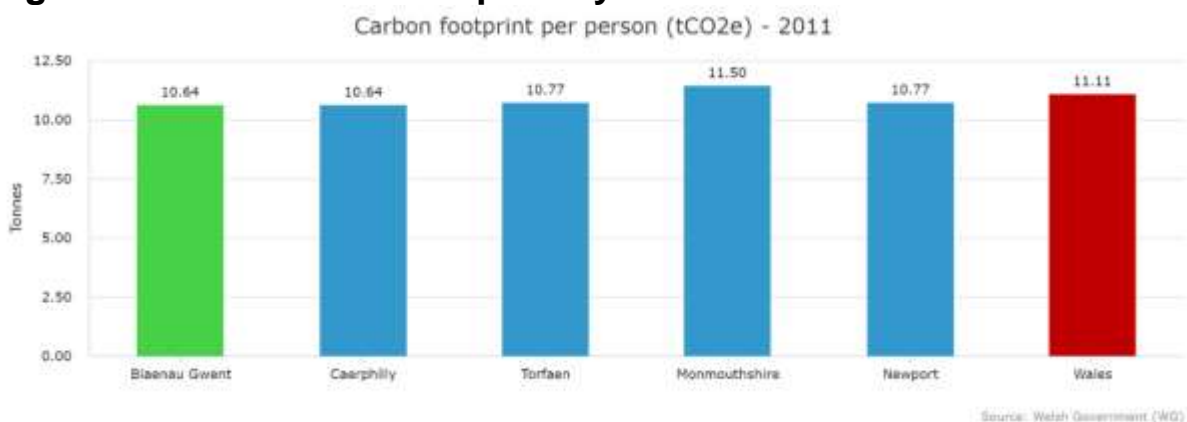
2. What is the data saying?

2.1 At a Blaenau Gwent level

Local authorities with the lowest carbon footprint tend to be those with the lowest overall environmental burden per capita i.e. the valleys and more densely populated areas in South Wales⁸.

Figure EF01 shows the carbon footprint per person across the Gwent region for 2011, measured in tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent per person. This ranged from 10.64 tonnes per person in Caerphilly and Blaenau Gwent to 11.50 tonnes per person in Monmouthshire. This compared with 11.10 tonnes per person for Wales.

Figure CEF01: Carbon Footprint by area

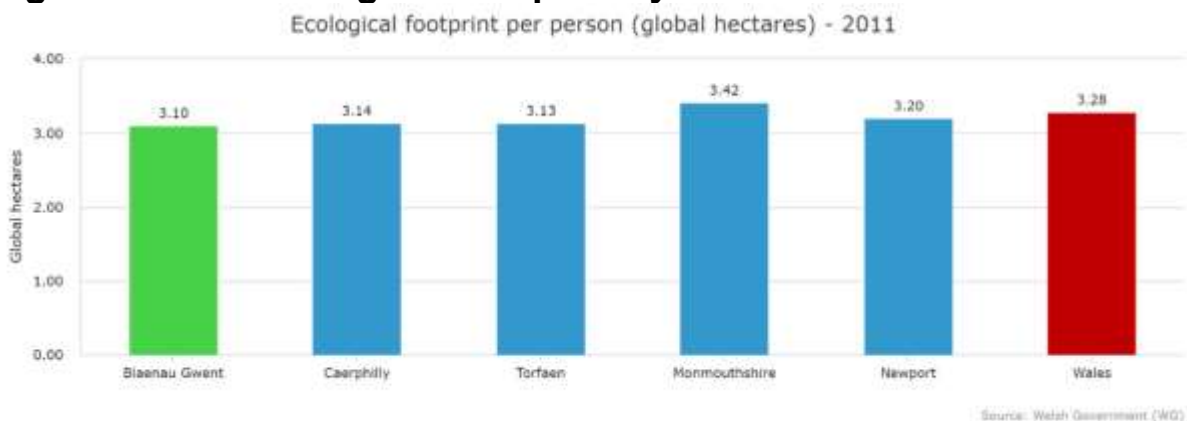


⁸ 2015. Ecological and Carbon Footprints of Wales – Update to 2010. Stockholm Environment Institute and GHD.

The ecological footprint is an indicator of the total environmental burden that society places on the planet. It represents the area of land needed to provide raw materials, energy and food, as well as absorb pollution and waste created. It is measured in global hectares⁹. The ecological footprint for a particular population is defined as “the total area of productive land and water ecosystems required to produce the resources that the population consumes and assimilate the wastes that production produces, wherever on Earth that land and water may be located”¹⁰. The consumption of food, housing, transport, consumer items, private services and public services together accounts for 85% of the ecological footprint.

Figure EF02 shows the ecological footprint per person across the Gwent region for 2011. This ranged from 3.10 global hectares per person in Blaenau Gwent to 3.42 global hectares per person in Monmouthshire. This compares with 3.30 global hectares per person for Wales.

Figure CEF02: Ecological Footprint by area



2.2 At a neighbourhood area level

Information has not been sought at a neighbourhood level for this measure but could be explored if identified as a priority issue by the Blaenau Gwent Public Service Board.

⁹ 2015. Ecological and Carbon Footprints of Wales – Update to 2010. Stockholm Environment Institute and GHD.

¹⁰ Rees, W. E. (2000); Eco-footprint analysis: merits and brickbats. UNSD, 2007.

2.3 Interpretation of data

The data shows that Blaenau Gwent is starting from a good position as it has the lowest carbon and ecological footprint of the area's that have had comparable data shown and is also below the whole of Wales average. It could also be interpreted that Blaenau Gwent is one of the most deprived and given that fact the data shows that there may be a higher number of people in fuel and monetary poverty that cannot afford a standard of living that the other areas, and Wales in general, can. It also shows that Monmouthshire being considered quite an affluent area has the highest carbon and ecological footprint which reinforces the notion that Blaenau Gwent's low score in both areas could be linked to poverty.

2.4 What are the critical issues for public services to consider?

Lowering the carbon and ecological footprint further, whilst not at the expense of more hardship for the population, is essential. If you lower the carbon footprint, by proxy you will lower energy use, which in turn lowers the cost of energy, which will enable the population to have more money available. What is required is significant investment to upgrade things like lighting, heating and water use. There are a large number of very inefficient buildings within Blaenau Gwent with very old infrastructure within the buildings. There is also a need for joined-up thinking. For example it is of limited value in insulating a building without upgrading the heating controls within that building. This is because the building will simply overheat, and windows will be opened and more not less energy will be used.

3. What research exists to help us develop a response to this/ these issues?

Climate Change

Climate change is happening in Wales. Over the period 1914 to 2006, daily mean temperature rose by 0.7°C, and there has been a 22.4 day reduction in air frosts per year between 1961 and 2006. There has been a significant decline in summer rainfall in Wales of 24% (1914-2006), and heavy rainfall events (between 1961 and 2006) have increased in winter and decreased in summer (Jenkins et al. 2009).

In 2009, Welsh Government summarised the projected climatic changes for Wales as:

- More frequent and intense rainfall events.
- Hotter, drier summers.
- More extremely warm days.
- Milder, wetter winters.
- Less snowfall and frost.

With these predicted changes in weather, the Committee on Climate Change (2017) has identified key risks. These are: more frequent flooding to communities, businesses and infrastructure; the effects on health and wellbeing from high temperatures; water shortages; impacts to the benefits nature provides (natural capital); threats to UK and global food production; and new and emerging pests and diseases.

4. Five ways of working

4.1 Collaboration

<i>Adds no value</i>	<i>Adds some value</i>	<i>Adds moderate value</i>	<i>Critical to tackle the issue</i>
			X

Collaboration between the Public and Private sectors is essential to tackle area-wide carbon and ecological issues but investment is the key. There is no doubt the area has the expertise to help tackle these issues but the lack of investment means just within the area there is a huge maintenance backlog running into millions of pounds that means investment in energy saving measures and equipment is not able to become a reality.

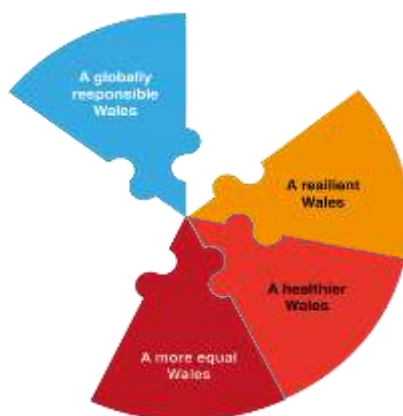
4.2 a) Integration – links with themes

<i>Economic</i>	<i>Social</i>	<i>Environmental</i>	<i>Cultural</i>
X		X	

Economic – Investing in a low carbon economy will produce jobs in the local economy as well as lowering the carbon footprint.

Environmental - By lowering the carbon footprint it provides better air quality for the population and also the environmental biodiversity which means healthier people, plants and animals. Healthier people will also reduce the strains on the NHS thus providing more money for the national economy.

4.2b) Integration –Contribution to the National Goal



Supporting Commentary

Acting on climate change through the development of an innovative, productive and low carbon society, and working towards using resources efficiently will add to the prosperity of Blaenau Gwent.

Taking steps towards reducing our Carbon and Ecological Footprint shall contribute towards developing and maintaining eco-systems that support the social, economic and ecological resilience of Blaenau Gwent.

4.3 Thinking to the Long Term

Short term (1-2)	<i>Low impact as works just starting, the benefits will become apparent as work continues</i>
Medium term (2-5 years)	<i>Impact of investment and low carbon economy being felt, better standard of living, better air quality, more jobs created leading to a wealthier, healthier society.</i>
Long term (10 years plus)	<i>Impact on Local Population and Environment. Jobs, Health and Education</i>

4.4 Prevention

There are a number of issues affecting carbon footprints throughout Wales. In Blaenau Gwent the biggest cause is very inefficient heating and lighting systems borough wide. The need to tackle this issue is paramount but to tackle this large amounts of investment are required. By investing and upgrading you also reduce fuel poverty, create jobs and make the local area a better place to live with the added bonus of much more Ecological diversity.

4.5 Involvement

During the 'Blaenau Gwent We Want' Public Engagement Programme we received no comments related to our carbon and ecological footprint.

However, our theme 'Environment' was by far the most popular theme overall with 822 (21%) individual comments being categorised into it showing how important a good quality environment was to our residents.

See 7.5 [Renewable Energy](#) for more information.

5. What is currently being done to tackle this issue?

5.1 Is this issue currently being tackled in partnership?

The critical issues highlighted at 2.4 do not feature within the SIP.

5.2 What wider assets could assist in tackling this issue?

The Welsh Government and Carbon Trust. Community groups and charities need to be engaged and educated.

6. What this tells us about Well-being in Blaenau Gwent

- There is Fuel Poverty in Blaenau Gwent.
- There is Ecological damage being done.
- Investment is badly needed
- Jobs need to be created.
- Lowering of the Carbon Footprint is essential for both fuel poverty and ecological diversity.
- Engagement with the public, community groups and charities is essential.
- Upgrading building stock is a top priority.

In short, lowering the carbon footprint if done properly will create a society with health, wealth, education and an ecologically diverse environment.

Section 7.5: Renewable Energy

1. Overview

Renewable Energy generally comes from a source that is not depleted once used. More common applications are solar, wind, and hydro power.

Renewable energy is an important way of replacing Green House Gas (GHG) producing fuels and in some circumstances can be a form of revenue.

Renewable energy is mainly dependent on natural phenomena/weather, so in some cases can be unreliable.

2. What is the data saying?

2.1 At a Blaenau Gwent level

Figure EN01 shows the capacity, in megawatts (MW), of renewable energy equipment installed across the Gwent region in 2015. This ranged from 6.7MW in Torfaen to 53.0MW in Caerphilly. The figure for Blaenau Gwent was 19.1MW.

Figure EN01 – Renewable Energy by area

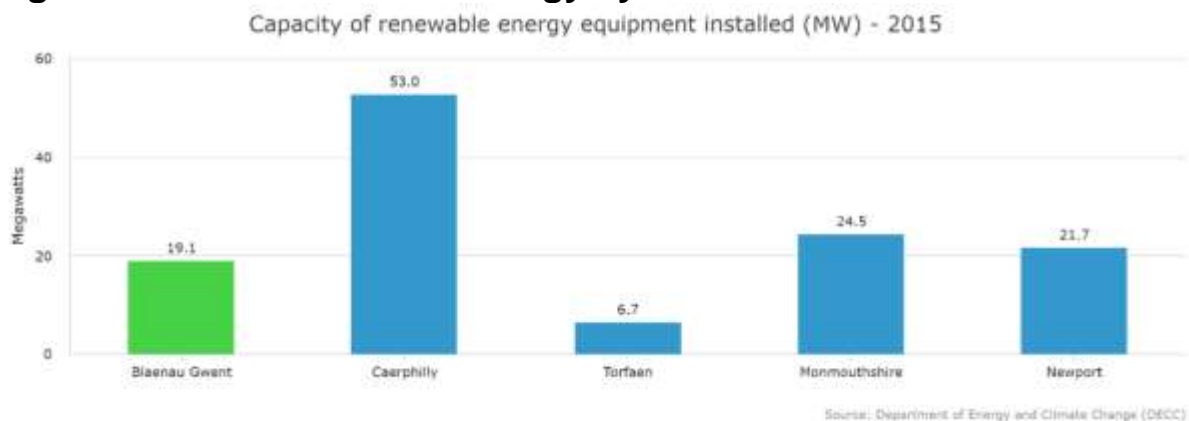
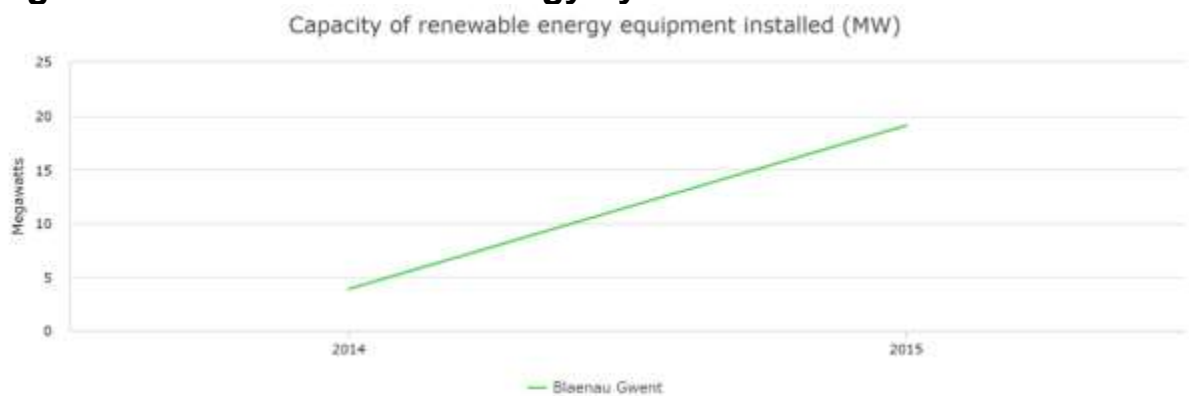


Figure EN02 shows the capacity of renewable energy equipment installed in Blaenau Gwent has increased by 15.2MW between 2014 and 2015.

Figure EN02 – Renewable Energy by area



	Blaenau Gwent
2014	3.9
2015	19.1

Source: Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC)

It is widely believed that the initial take up on renewable sources, particularly in the domestic sector, was driven by the opportunities to receive payment (Feed In Tariff) for energy produced and used on site rather than the reduction in GHG. Early installers were party to good 'Return On Investment' (ROI). Installation continued to rise until the FIT was so reduced that the financial incentive could be considered negligible. This may show a slower uptake of renewable installations in the short term.

Larger organisations and some suppliers are installing large schemes such as solar farms with the aim of meeting legislation and climate change agreements set out by worldwide governments.

2.2 At a neighbourhood area level

This measure does easily not lend itself to exploring neighbourhood area level data.

2.3 Interpretation of data

The sharp increase in renewable energy capacity in 2015 is largely as a result of a major solar farm project which contributed approximately 70% of the 15.2 MW. Other traditional sources of renewable energy contribution in Blaenau Gwent are biomass boilers, wind turbines and Building Integrated Technologies (e.g. solar panels, ground source heat pumps). The number of large wind turbines in the area have increased quite dramatically recently rising from 1 in 2012 to 6 in 2016.

2.4 What are the critical issues for public services to consider?

Because of the loss of potential revenue the installation of renewable energy will not be so readily attractive to some. A greater awareness of the issues relating to climate change, the depletion of fossil fuels, should be emphasised in the public domain and private sector industries.

3. What research exists to help us develop a response to this/ these issues?

A county borough wide Renewable Energy Assessment has been prepared to assess the potential of the Blaenau Gwent area to contribute to national greenhouse gas emission reduction targets. The Assessment found that there was potential to meet the target of 38% of our total electrical energy need from renewable sources. There was however insufficient potential to meet our heat energy from renewable sources. The potential was 6% which was half of the national target of 12%. The document helped inform corporate objectives and Local Development Plan Policy.

4. Five ways of working

4.1 Collaboration

<i>Adds no value</i>	<i>Adds some value</i>	<i>Adds moderate value</i>	<i>Critical to tackle the issue</i>
		X	

To assess the feasibility of the merit in installing renewables will mean in depth studies in reliability of the source at the location and the potential effective consumption. This would include times when the source is available in comparison to the occupation of the proposed location.

By organisations comparing their needs and working together they can ensure the best source is installed to suit those needs. This might include organisations being able to make use of the source at different times of day, leading to smaller capacity systems.

The rising costs of installation could be somewhat negated by shared funding and potential savings and incomes shared among consumers.

4.2 a) Integration – links with themes

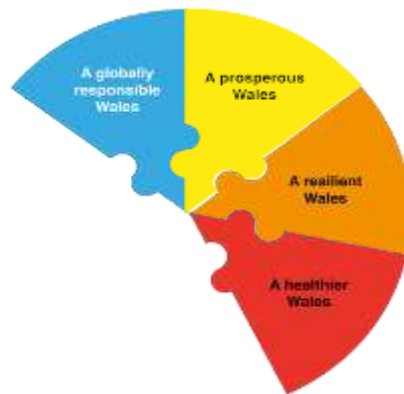
<i>Economic</i>	<i>Social</i>	<i>Environmental</i>	<i>Cultural</i>
X			

Aiming to save costs by installing renewables will have an economic benefit for the consumers and could create jobs in the local area.

Sympathetic installation can have a positive effect locally by ensuring flora and fauna are considered before, during and after installation. While globally the small effect will have add to all other measured put in place to fight climate change.

Social and cultural effects could be simply improving the reputation of the locality in the broader perception of the general populace and installed systems could become educational resources for schools or local training schemes.

4.2b) Integration –Contribution to the National Goal



Supporting Commentary

The creation of a resilient economy that manages resources efficiently and protects the security of supply of raw materials.

Prosperity prospects could also be improved if more green jobs are developed.

4.3 Thinking to the Long Term

<i>Short term</i> <i>(1-2)</i>	Low impact as works just starting, the benefits will become apparent as work continues
<i>Medium term</i> <i>(2-5 years)</i>	Impact of investment and low carbon economy being felt, better standard of living, better air quality, more jobs created leading to a wealthier, healthier society.
<i>Long term</i> <i>(10 years plus)</i>	Potential impact on local population and environment. Benefits via jobs, improvements in people's health and education.

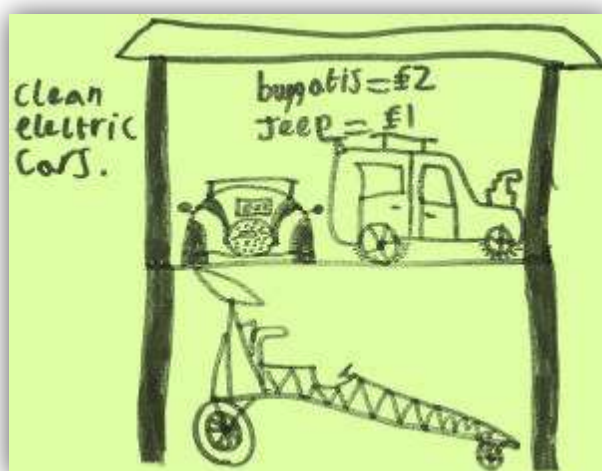
4.4 Prevention

While renewables are a valuable way of reducing GHG and in some case reducing costs and generating revenue, there are other considerations that should also be explored. Some properties waste energy through outdated systems, poor maintenance and not taking advantage of ever improving technologies. Not ensuring these issues are dealt with first could result in overkill on installed systems leading to overspending on installation and systems that are not being employed at their full potential.

4.5 Involvement

During the 'Blaenau Gwent We Want' Public Engagement Programme we received just 3 comments related to renewable energy; 1 that "wind turbines are good" and 2 about how wind turbines are spoiling the look of the landscape.

Selection of relevant images from 'Blaenau Gwent We Want' process



5. What is currently being done to tackle this issue?

5.1 Is this issue currently being tackled in partnership?

BGCBC are currently involved in the RE:FIT Cymru project which aims to identify and fund energy carbon reducing opportunities via invest to save schemes. As part of that, potential sites for renewable energies will be explored.

5.2 What wider assets could assist in tackling this issue?

Wider assets that could be used to tackle the issue will be explored through further response analysis work dependant on priority setting of the PSB.

6. What this tells us about Well-being in Blaenau Gwent

- Jobs can be created particularly in the short term.
- Renewables can help to ensure the security of future energy supply.
- Renewables can improve the carbon and ecological footprint.
- Showing a commitment to renewable sources can improve the image and help residents have a feel good factor about the area where they live.
- Engagement with public and private sector and volunteer organisations can facilitate the feasibility and installation progress
- Studies need to be ongoing to ensure the best source can be matched to the correct sites and any that have been ruled out can be re-evaluated.
- Renewable energy sources can have a positive effect on the economic, social, environmental and cultural aspects of the area.

Section 7.6: Waste and Recycling

1. Overview

Over the past decade, Wales has transformed the way it deals with waste by increasing its recycling rate from 13% (2002/03) to 56.2% in (2014/15).

[‘Towards Zero Waste’](#) (TZW) is the overarching waste strategy document for Wales and was published in 2010. TZW sets out at a high level strategy for how we are to manage waste in Wales to produce benefits not only for the environment, but also for our economy and social wellbeing. The strategy outlines the actions we must take if we are to realise the ambition of becoming a high recycling nation by 2025 and a zero waste nation by 2050.

National Targets

TZW sets targets for municipal waste collected by area. The recycling targets became law from April 2012 under the Waste (Wales) Measure 2010. The first statutory target was to reuse, recycle or compost 52% of municipal waste collected by local authorities in 2012-13. The next target is 64% in 2019/20. Targets are outlined in Figure WR01.

Figure WR01: Targets for waste collection in Wales

Target for:	2015/16	2019/20	2024/25	2050
Minimum levels of preparing for reuse and recycling/composting (or Anaerobic Digestion)	58%	64%	70%	Zero Waste Nation
Minimum proportion of preparing for reuse/recycling/composting that must come from source separation (kerbside, bring and/ or CA site) for municipal waste	80%	80%	80%	

Source: Welsh Government

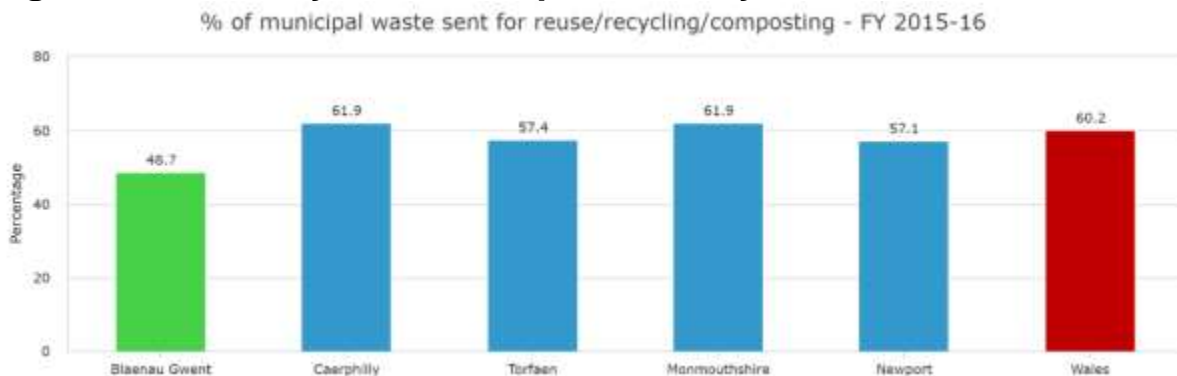
In March 2011, The Welsh Government published the 'Collections Blueprint - For affordable and sustainable local authority collection services for recyclable, compostable and residual waste'. The Collections Blueprint describes the Welsh Government's recommended service profile for the collection of waste from households.

2. What is the data saying?

2.1 At a Blaenau Gwent level

WR02 shows the percentage of municipal waste sent for reuse, recycling or composting across the Gwent region in 2015-16. This ranged from 48.7% of municipal waste in Blaenau Gwent to 61.9% of municipal waste in Monmouthshire and Caerphilly. This compares with 60.2% for Wales.

Figure WR02: Recycled municipal waste by area

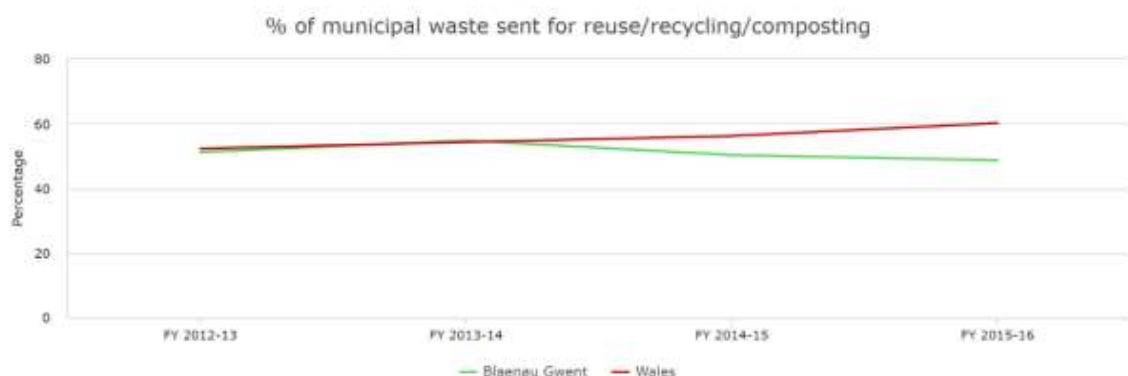


Source: Welsh Government

Figure WR03 shows the change in the percentage of municipal waste sent for reuse, recycling or composting over the period 2012-13 to 2015-16.

While the percentage has increased by 7.7 percentage points for Wales over the period, in Blaenau Gwent it decreased by 2.5 percentage points.

Figure WR03: Recycled municipal waste in Blaenau Gwent by time



	Blaenau Gwent	Wales
FY 2012-13	51.2	52.3
FY 2013-14	54.8	54.3
FY 2014-15	50.3	56.2
FY 2015-16	48.7	60.2

Source: Welsh Government

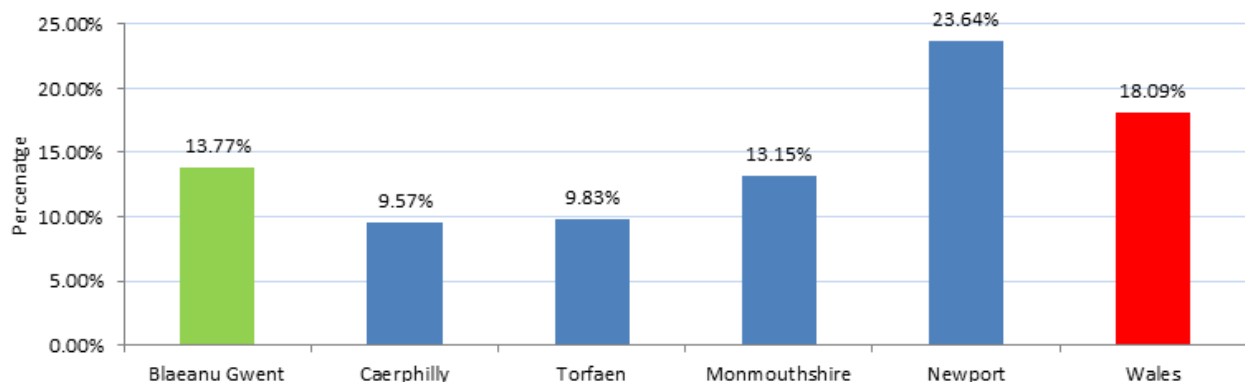
Landfill

Landfilling our waste is not a sustainable option. The act of disposing our waste directly into landfill is a waste of all the raw material and energy that went into making the products that we use. Landfilling our waste also creates methane, a powerful greenhouse gas that is 23 times more damaging to the environment than carbon dioxide.

The Landfill Allowances Scheme (Wales) Regulations 2004 (The LAS regulations) came into force in Wales on 1 October 2004, to reduce the amount of biodegradable municipal waste (BMW) going to landfill sites.

The following show how Blaenau Gwent has performed against its landfill targets.

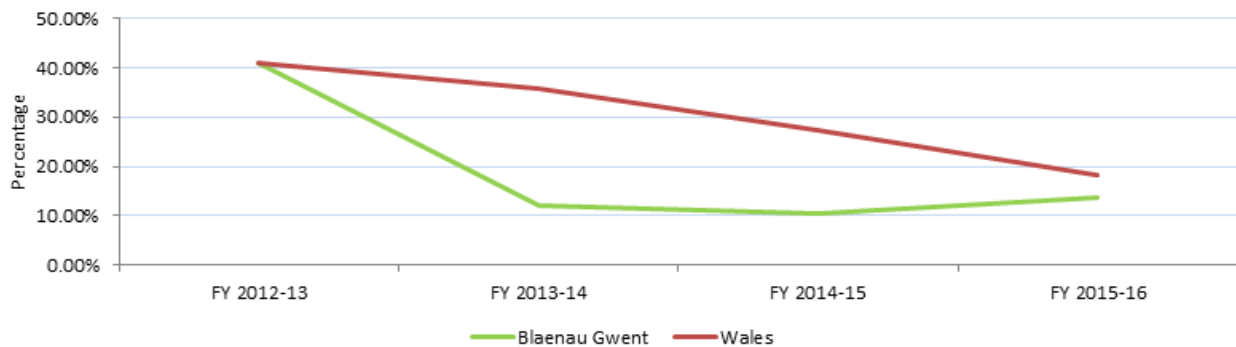
Figure WR04: Percentage of municipal wastes collected by area sent to landfill (2015/16)



Source: Welsh Government

Figure WR05 shows Blaenau Gwent rate of wastes collected sent to landfill has been generally reducing over time, and is below the rate witnessed for Wales overall.

Figure WR05: Percentage of municipal wastes collected in Blaenau Gwent sent to landfill by time

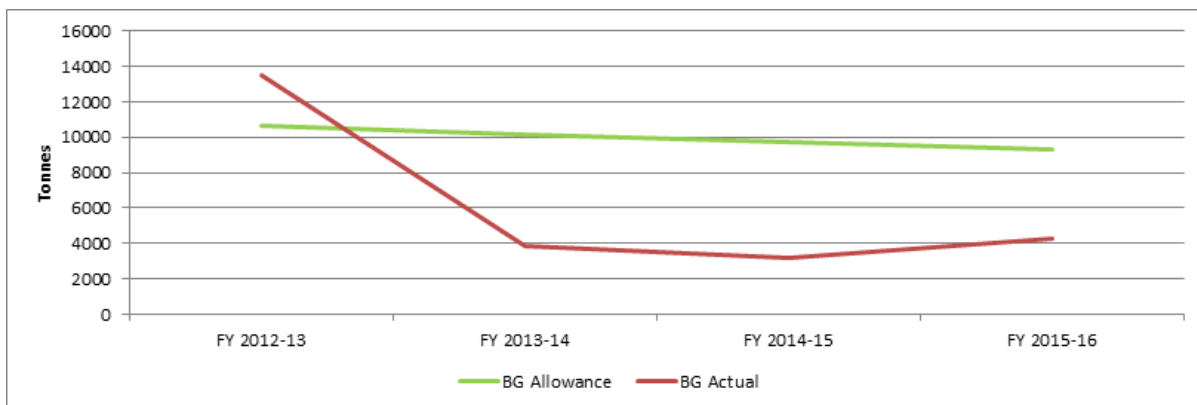


Year	Blaenau Gwent	Wales
FY 2012-13	40.98%	41.13%
FY 2013-14	11.96%	35.69%
FY 2014-15	10.32%	27.40%
FY 2015-16	13.77%	18.09%

Source: Welsh Government

Figure WR06 shows that since 2012/13 Blaenau Gwent's waste sent to landfill has been below the landfill allowance highlighted for the area.

Figure WR06: Landfill Allowance Scheme for Blaenau Gwent by time



	BG Allowance	BG Actual
FY 2012-13	10,631	13,487.89
FY 2013-14	10,179	3,817.74
FY 2014-15	9,726	3,160.75
FY 2015-16	9,274	4,249.46

Source: Welsh Government

2.2 At a neighbourhood area level

Rates of recycling are not available at a neighbourhood area level.

2.3 Interpretation of data

The data for Blaenau Gwent shows that whilst there have been improvements in reducing the amount of waste sent to landfill, there are still improvements which need to be made in recycling if statutory targets are to be met.

In October 2015, Blaenau Gwent Council implemented a number of service changes to align local services to the Welsh Government's recommended service profile for the collection of waste from households. These included:

- Weekly separate collection of dry recyclables via 'kerbside sort', with material being collected separately in boxes and/or in re-usable sacks, and recyclables being sorted into separate compartments on the collection vehicle by the collection staff;
- The use of modern lightweight, multi-compartment vehicles for a single pass collection of dry recyclables and food waste; and
- Reduced frequency of collection of residual waste (three weekly).

However, it is recognised that if the statutory recycling targets of 64% by 2019/2020 and 70% by 2024/2025 are to be met (as set out in the Towards Zero Waste), on-going improvements will need to be made in recycling.

2.4 What are the critical issues for public services to consider?

If Blaenau Gwent is to achieve the recycling targets, this can only be achieved by working in partnership with our citizens and communities. For householders this means having to adapt their understanding and behaviour.

Waste management adds to Welsh greenhouse gas emissions which are a key factor contributing to climate change.

3. What research exists to help us develop a response to these issues?

Research completed by WRAP has been undertaken to generate an in-depth understanding of what may prevent some householders from recycling.

4. Five ways of working

4.1 Collaboration

Waste management is the responsibility of the Local Authority, there is some value to be gained in working in collaboration with the PSB and partners to improve recycling performance in Blaenau Gwent.

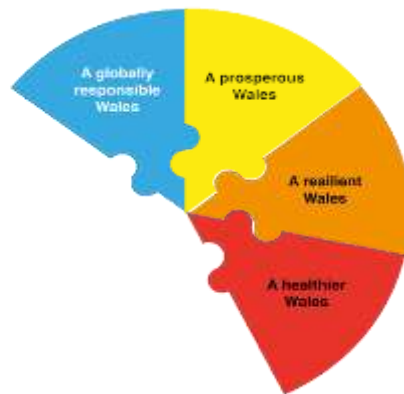
Adds no value	Adds some value	Adds moderate value	Critical to tackle the issue
		X	

4.2 a) Integration – links with themes

Improving opportunities for individuals and communities to contribute to a resource efficient economy and society can promote a sense of community, social cohesion and wellbeing through improved waste management at a local level.

Economic	Social	Environmental	Cultural
	X		

4.2b) Integration –Contribution to the National Goal



Supporting Commentary

The creation of a resilient economy that manages resources efficiently and protects the security of supply of raw materials.

Prosperity prospects could also be improved if more green jobs are developed.

4.3 Thinking to the Long Term

<i>Short term</i> <i>(1-2)</i>	Some impact as benefits of improved recycling service are realised at a local level
<i>Medium term</i> <i>(2-5 years)</i>	Opportunities for individuals and communities to participate in and contribute to a more resource efficient society with higher recycling rates achieved and waste managed more effectively at a local level
<i>Long term</i> <i>(10 years plus)</i>	Ecological footprint, greenhouse gas emissions and climate change impact reduced through improved waste management at a local and national level

4.4 Prevention

If identified as a PSB priority further work will be undertaken as part of our response analysis to fully understand the existing gaps that need to be addressed in partnership. This will as part of our Logic approach identify costs and benefits of any proposed solutions.

4.5 Involvement

During the 'Blaenau Gwent We Want' Public Engagement Programme our topic 'waste and recycling' was the 12th most popular overall with 123 (3%) comments categorised into it. However, improvements to the service was 7th most popular when we asked what would make Blaenau Gwent a better place (115 comments, 4%).

Common issues emerging were the desire for more regular waste collection and a return to recycling bags, cheaper or free bulky waste collections, more dog waste bins, and more recycling centres. There were also a small number of comments praising the waste and recycling collection service.

Those responding in Lower Ebbw Fach (6%) were more likely to say that the waste and recycling service needed to be improved, and those in the Sirhowy valley were the least likely (2%) (Upper Ebbw Fach 3%, Ebbw Fawr 5%). There were some comments from those in Upper Ebbw Fach requesting the re-opening of the recycling centre in Blaina.

Examples of comments we received:



Selection of relevant images from 'Blaenau Gwent We Want' process



5. What is currently being done to tackle this issue?

5.1 Is this issue currently being tackled in partnership?

Since 2012, Blaenau Gwent has been working with Welsh Government through the Collaborative Change Programme to deliver the recommended service profile for the collection of waste from households.

5.2 What wider assets could assist in tackling this issue?

Community groups.

6. What this tells us about Well-being in Blaenau Gwent

If Blaenau Gwent is to achieve the recycling targets, this can only be achieved by working in partnership with our citizens and communities. For householders this means having to adapt their understanding and behaviour.



8. Next Steps

8. Next Steps

This comprehensive, technical well-being assessment has been produced to meet the requirements of the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#) which states that the Public Services Board (PSB) must prepare and publish an assessment of the state of economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being in its area.

This assessment must be used to by the PSB to support them to identify the objectives for the local well-being plan for Blaenau Gwent, which will be produced by May 2018, in-line with the legislative requirement.

Steps towards a Well-being Plan for Blaenau Gwent

This assessment will be a fundamental resource for the PSB to use as part of the process to develop and implement an effective local well-being plan for Blaenau Gwent.

The first step in this process will be for the PSB to hold a ‘special meeting’ in April 2017 to consider the breath of evidence presented within this assessment, and outline a finite number of indicative priorities.

Following this, the next step will be to consider these indicative priorities identified by the PSB through a process called ‘[response analysis](#)’. This process will begin in May 2017, and initially run until July 2017, in-line with the overall timeframe for the well-being planning process.

The response analysis process will be tailored for each indicative priority, which will allow for detailed investigation to be carried out to understand the issues, and identify potential actions for solutions. This process will take a collaborative approach, engaging professional stakeholders and interested parties. Furthermore, the process of

response analysis will be supported by a third phase of the 'Blaenau Gwent We Want' to ensure that local people have the opportunity to have their say, and further shape the developing process.

Following this, the next step will be for the PSB, in their July 2017 meeting, to consider the findings of the response analysis and agree a draft set of well-being objectives to shape a draft well-being plan.

Supporting these two steps will be a statutory process of engagement with the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales to seek advice on the forming well-being objectives. This process will be for a maximum period of 14 weeks.

The next step will see a draft well-being plan being produced, and during the autumn 2017 this draft will be released for a 12-week period for statutory consultation. The statutory consultation will be supported by a fourth phase of the 'Blaenau Gwent We Want' to ensure that local people have the opportunity to have their say on the draft well-being plan.

The PSB will consider the feedback from this statutory process to produce the final well-being plan for the Blaenau Gwent. This plan will then be considered by PSB member organisations for formal approval (for some organisations this is a statutory process).

Following approval by the partner organisations the plan will move into an implementation stage, where the responsible partner organisations will work together to deliver the commitments set out in this important plan for Blaenau Gwent.

Keeping the Assessment Process ‘Live’

Supporting this planning process, there is an on-going commitment by the PSB to embrace the principles of an ‘on-going approach’ to assessing well-being in Blaenau Gwent. Fundamental to this approach will be the response analysis process noted above, and the PSB using its website to ensure that further information and intelligence gleaned as part of our on-going process is presented for consideration.

Furthermore, it is recognised that although this assessment is comprehensive, it does not provide a full picture of well-being for the area. As part of the process the PSB has been able to recognise a number of areas where further information and intelligence would be beneficial. This is captured in this assessment, under the chapter [Identified Data Development Areas](#). Development areas identified include potential topics identified as part of the formal consultation process on this assessment, further information on strategic challenges and opportunities, and topics identified through the development of shaping the final assessment.

The PSB Strategic Support Group will oversee the process of considering these identified areas for development.

Finally, the PSB will consider additional information, research and intelligence that is produced as and when it becomes available, with specific examples being the Future Trends Report for Wales being produced by the Welsh Government under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, and the Area Statements being produced by Natural Resources Wales under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.



9. Assurance

9. Assurance

The Statutory Guidance produced by Welsh Government [*SPSF 3: Collective role \(public services boards\)*](#) outlines that the Act specifies a number of statutory reviews and assessments which must be taken into account when preparing a well-being assessment. These are:

- [Climate Change Assessment](#);
- [Review of sufficiency of nursery education provision](#);
- [Childcare Sufficiency Assessment](#)
- [Play Sufficiency Assessment](#)
- [Population Needs Assessment \[Social Services and Well-being \(Wales\) Act 2014\]](#)
- [Community Safety Strategic Assessment](#)
- [Substance Misuse Strategic Assessment](#)
- [Reduction of Reoffending Strategic Assessment](#)
- [Environment Area Statement \[Environment \(Wales\) Act 2016\]](#)

Furthermore, the Commissioner for Older People in Wales has released additional guidance under Section 12 of the Commissioner for Older People (Wales) Act 2006, called [*Preparing Local Wellbeing Plans: Guidance for Public Services Boards*](#), which must be regarded to in discharging their functions. Additionally, the Children's Commissioner for Wales wrote to the PSB to emphasise the importance of embedding children's rights into the well-being planning process.

The following pages outline how this assessment has taken into account each of the assessments noted above, the additional guidance from the [Commissioner for Older People in Wales](#), and any other relevant local, regional or national policy frameworks.

Climate Change Assessment

Description		
Assessment of the risks for the United Kingdom of the current and predicted impact of climate change sent to the Welsh Ministers under section 56(6) of the Climate Change Act 2008 (c.27)		
Availability	Level	Source
25 Jan 2012 (1st on a 5 year cycle)	UK	UK Government website
Note		
<p>Document has been reviewed in preparing the Blaenau Gwent Well-being Assessment. The Government published the UK Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA) on 25 January 2012, the first assessment of its kind for the UK and the first in a 5 year cycle. It sets out the main priorities for adaptation in the UK under 5 key themes identified in the CCRA 2012 Evidence Report - Agriculture and Forestry; Business, industries and Services; Health and Wellbeing; Natural Environment and Buildings and Infrastructure. It describes the policy context, and action already in place to tackle some of the risks in each area. It highlights the constraints of the CCRA analysis and provides advice on how to take account of the uncertainty within the analysis.</p> <p>The Climate Change Risk Assessment for Wales has been considered.</p>		
Position Statement		
<p>Referenced in Environmental Well-being chapter, in particular Section 7.4: Carbon and Ecological Footprint.</p> <p>Furthermore, Climate Change is referenced in the <i>Thinking to our Future: An Overview of Strategic Challenges and Opportunities</i></p>		

Review of sufficiency of nursery education provision

Description		
Review of the sufficiency of nursery education provision for the local authority area carried out under section 119(5)(a) of the School Standards and Frameworks Act 1998 (c.31)		
Availability	Level	Source
Unavailable	-	-
Note		
An assessment has not been undertaken by the local authority as it has been deemed as not a statutory requirement.		
Position Statement		
As a consequence of the note above, this assessment does not consider nursery education.		

Childcare Sufficiency Assessment

Description		
Assessment of the sufficiency of the provision of childcare in the local authority area carried out in accordance with regulations made under section 26(1) of the Childcare Act 2006 (c.21)		
Availability	Level	Source
2014 - 2017	Blaenau Gwent	Blaenau Gwent Website
Note		
Whilst this document was not available in final draft to inform our Well-being Assessment. The assessment has taken into account what information was available.		
Position Statement		
Referenced in Economic Well-being chapter, in particular Section 4.1: Economic Activity .		

Play Sufficiency Assessment

Description		
Assessment of the sufficiency of play opportunities in the local authority area carried out under section 11(1) of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010;		
Availability	Level	Source
From (March) 2016 to 2019 (renewable after 3 years)	Blaenau Gwent	Blaenau Gwent Website
Note		
The document has been reviewed in preparing this assessment.		
Position Statement		
Referenced in Social Well-being chapter, in particular Section 5.3: Baby and Children's Health and Development .		
Furthermore, cross references are made to the following sections: Community Safety ; and Sports, Recreation, Arts, Culture and Heritage .		

Population Needs Assessment

Description		
Assessment carried out by the local authority in conjunction with a Local Health Board under section 14 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 (the “population assessment” of needs for care and support, support for carers and preventative services)		
Availability	Level	Source
April 2017	Gwent/Blaenau Gwent	Gwent Health and Social Care Transformation Team
Note		
Under the Social Services and Well-being Act (2014) there is a statutory duty on local authorities and health boards to prepare a regional population needs assessment (PNA) in relation to people requiring care and support. A PNA has been jointly developed across the region (Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, Newport and Torfaen) by Aneurin Bevan University Health Board and Gwent Transformation Team. The PNA sets out the common priorities across the region and suggested actions.		
Position Statement		
Available versions of the maturing document have been considered in preparing the Blaenau Gwent Well-being Assessment. Referenced in Social Well-being chapter, in particular: Ageing Well ; Homes and Households ; and Social Care and Support .		

Community Safety Strategic Assessment

Description		
strategic assessment prepared in accordance with regulations under section 6 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (c.37) relating to reducing crime and disorder in the local authority area;		
Availability	Level	Source
Safer Gwent Strategic Assessment From 1st April 2015 to 31st March 2016 (completed 1st January 2017)	Gwent and its 5 local authority areas	Gwent Police
Note		
The Safer Gwent Strategic Assessment has been prepared in accordance with section 6 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 relating to crime and disorder in the local authority. Additionally, in preparing the assessment the Office of Police and Crime Commissioner's Analyst has in preparing their document made reference to Substance Misuse and Reducing Reoffending. Furthermore, additional analytical research was carried out beyond the Safer Gwent Strategic Assessment by Gwent Police and the Local Government Data Unit to support the development of this assessment.		
Position Statement		
Referenced in Social Well-being chapter, in particular: Community Safety .		

Substance Misuse Strategic Assessment

Description		
Strategic assessment prepared in accordance with regulations under that section relating to combating substance misuse in the local authority area.		
Availability	Level	Source
June 2013	Gwent and its 5 local authority areas	Gwent Area Planning Board
Note		
In preparing the Gwent Police Strategic Assessment , the Office of Police and Crime Commissioner's Analyst has in preparing their document made reference to Substance Misuse.		
Position Statement		
Referenced in Social Well-being chapter, in particular: Community Safety .		

Reduction of Reoffending Strategic Assessment

Description		
Strategic assessment prepared in accordance with regulations under that section relating to the reduction of reoffending in the local authority area;		
Availability	Level	Source
Gwent Crime, Reoffending and Needs Profile Report From April 2012 to March 2013. Produced August 2014	Gwent and its 5 local authority areas	Gwent Police ,Integrated Offender Management Cymru
Note		
In preparing the Gwent Police Strategic Assessment the Office of Police and Crime Commissioner's Analyst has in preparing their document made reference to Reducing Reoffending.		
Position Statement		
Referenced in Social Well-being chapter, in particular: Community Safety .		

Environment Area Statement [Environment (Wales) Act 2016]

Description		
Each area statement under section 11 of the Environment (Wales) Bill 2016, once enacted, which relates to any part of the local authority's area.		
Availability	Level	Source
Not yet produced	Local authority areas	Natural Resources Wales
Note		
Natural Resources Wales (NRW) is required to produce Area Statements under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. The Area Statements will not be available within the Well-being Assessment/Plan timescales. However, NRW provided the Blaenau Gwent Public Services Board with an 'Evidence Pack' with appropriate environmental information to support the development of this well-being assessment.		
Position Statement		
The environment information provided by Natural Resources Wales is captured throughout the Environmental Well-being chapter.		

Commissioner for Older People in Wales

Description		
The Guidance <i>Preparing Local Wellbeing Plan: Guidance for Public Services Boards</i> was issued under Section 12 of the Commissioner for Older People (Wales) Act 2006.		
Availability	Level	Source
Released in 2016 by the Commissioner for Older People (Wales) Act 2006.	National Guidance	The Older People's Commissioner for Wales
Note		
The Guidance provides helpful, practical 'top tips' that place the outcomes for older people at the heart of service delivery, supporting a culture shift in how services are shaped and delivered to ensure that services reflect the needs of an individual, rather than an individual having to fit the system.		
Position Statement		
Referenced in Social Well-being chapter, in particular: Ageing Well .		

Children's Commissioner for Wales

Embedding Children's Rights for Future Generations

The PSB has ensured that the well-being assessment has been developed taking into account the views of those engaged through “Blaenau Gwent We Want”. As part of this programme, we continually engaged with children and young people to find out their feelings on well-being, what they value and how their well-being can be improved in the future. During [Phase 1](#) of “The Blaenau Gwent We Want” we attended the following events:

- **Blaenau Gwent Children's Grand Council**, October 2016 (approx. 50 children aged 8-10)
- **4 x 'Splash' youth events**, August 2016 (approx. 100 young people aged 11+)
- **Blaenau Gwent Youth Forum**, September 2016 (approx. 15 young people aged 11-25)
- **National Play Day and Family Fun Day Events**, Tredegar/Ebbw Vale, August 2016 (over 100 children and young people engaged with)
- **UNCRC Family Event**, Ebbw Vale, August 2016 (50+ children & Young people)
- **Newtown Rainbow Rangers**, September 2016 (approx. 20 children)
- **Abertillery School Transition**, September 2016 (approx. 10 children)

During [Phase 2](#) we revisited the Children's Grand Council (February 2017) and Youth Forum (March 2017) and also visited Coleg Gwent (February 2017) where we engaged with a further 50 young people (16+).

We did not restrict children and young people to feeding back in a particular way and allowed them to express themselves however they wished. This included numerous poems, stories, questionnaires, postcards and over 300 drawings and 16 “Graffiti Sheets”. We also promoted the UNCRC amongst many of the children we spoke with; allowing them to colour in a '[rights egg](#)' while finding out more about their rights as a child.

We are confident that feedback from children and young people has influenced this assessment and is referenced throughout the document.

Specific examples would be:

- A [poem](#) by children at the Blaenau Gwent School Grand Council on the new law for the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.
- An [example](#) of how children and young people recognised how special our environment is.
- Children and young people recognising the [importance of education and skills](#).
- Children and young people's [opinions](#) on health services and barriers to play.
- [Results](#) from the Health Behaviour of School-aged Children (HBSC) Survey.
- Opinions from children and young people collected as part of the [Population Needs Assessment](#) process.
- Opinion on children at the Blaenau Gwent We Want events on [future technology](#).

Drawings and illustrations that were collected mostly from children and young people were also used throughout the assessment to highlight some of the key issues emerging from each section.

Local, Regional and National Policy Frameworks

During the production of this well-being assessment the following were also considered:

- [Blaenau Gwent Local Development Plan](#)
- [Child Poverty Strategy for Wales and Tackling Poverty Action Plan](#)
- [Welsh Language Strategy](#)



10. Data Development

10. Identified Data Development Areas (DDAs)

Blaenau Gwent's Well-being Assessment is a live document. Therefore, as part of its ongoing development Blaenau Gwent's Public Services Board recognises the importance of identifying key data development areas (data gaps) which will need further consideration, post the initial publication of the document. This work will be undertaken as part of an ongoing, continuous process whereby Blaenau Gwent's evidence base will be gradually improved over time. This will enable the Public Services Board and others to understand and plan more effectively for well-being across Blaenau Gwent.

The Public Services Board will look to take this ongoing programme forward via the PSB Strategic Support Group (PSBSSG). For each of the DDAs identified the PSBSSG will undertake work to understand what might be needed in the short, medium and long term in relation to addressing data issues which will effectively inform the development of Blaenau Gwent's well-being plan. As well as identify DDAs which could be explored regionally via the Gwent Strategic Well-being Assessment Group.

The following table outlines identified DDAs and provides a description of each:

Data Development Areas	Description
Business engagement	Undertaken further engagement with Blaenau Gwent's business community (for example, Chambers of Commerce, retailers and other business groups) to further strengthen analysis of the economy.
Cultural identity	Understanding Blaenau Gwent's cultural identity through qualitative analysis.
Climate change	Understanding and tracking Blaenau Gwent's weather (via the MET Office and Tredegar's weather station).
Democracy and decision making	Understanding how Blaenau Gwent's communities get involved in issues relating to democracy and participate in decision making process.
Farming community contributions	Understanding Blaenau Gwent's farming community and how it contributes to the well-being of the area (for example, environmental, economic, social and cultural assets and benefits etc.)
Food and drink	Understanding available food and drink local networks and sources (for example, allotments, food banks and takeaways).
Futurology	Understanding the impact of future technology
Health inequality	Understanding how health inequality impacts on the well-being of Blaenau Gwent.

Individual citizen well-being	Understanding individual citizen well-being (“happiness pulse”) via the regional Happy Cities programme funded by Welsh Government via the Gwent Strategic Well-being Assessment Group.
Living standards	Understanding how standards of living impacts on the well-being of Blaenau Gwent.
Natural resources depletion	Understanding the depletion of Blaenau Gwent’s natural resources (i.e. natural materials or substances which can be exploited for economic gain).
Population dynamics	Understanding Blaenau Gwent’s population dynamics (in the short, medium and long term) specifically focusing on population loss.
Resources of health and social care	Understanding the available resources of health and social care (over the short, medium and long term) against the increases demand for these service areas.
Restorative justice (including the rehabilitation of offenders)	Understanding the needs of offenders within Blaenau Gwent, including opportunities for rehabilitation and restorative justice.
Town centre research	Undertaking further research into Blaenau Gwent’s town centres to understand what well-being issues are most critical to addressing relating to developing Blaenau Gwent’s economic well-being.

Well-being inequality	Understanding well-being inequality across Blaenau Gwent (for example, inequality linked to wages, poverty, air pollution etc.), including looking at predicative determinants of well-being inequality. Including understanding where interventions are being implemented successfully to tackle well-being inequality. This will be supported via a collaborative research project between Blaenau Gwent and Liverpool University.
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