



Wales as a Nation of Peace

Report by Academi Heddwch Cymru
August 2024

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Heddwch
Cymru

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Executive Summary

Peace is more than the absence of war. It is about creating a better world through societies living without fear, it is building social resilience alongside individual rights, and it is about promoting social justice, fairness, respect and equality. This is what is known as positive peace.

A number of states have made conscious decisions to place peace firmly on their national agendas, making peace part of their national identity and a key value for which they are recognised. Peace is seen by these states as something which evolves as part of a national dialogue and its hallmark is the manner in which they conduct their relationships.

Becoming a Nation of Peace will significantly enhance Wales's international profile, as it has for other 'peace nations', and provide Wales with a distinct identity on the international stage. It will also have a positive impact upon how we govern ourselves as a devolved nation with diverse communities and interests. But perhaps above all, Wales as a nation and its Government should promote peace because it has a value in its own right.

A strong foundation exists for Wales to become a Nation of Peace. For more than a century, the people of Wales have undertaken innovative – sometimes world-leading – initiatives to promote peace. With devolution, the scope for further innovation and a clearer identity as a Nation of Peace has vastly increased. Legislation and policies such as the *Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act (2015)* and the commitment to net zero demonstrate that the Welsh Government is capable both of innovation and visionary leadership with transformational potential. However, despite significant progress towards positive peace, much still needs to be done if Wales is to be a Nation of Peace.

Being a Nation of Peace is about how a nation sees itself and presents itself to others. A key element for Wales would therefore be to promote its proud legacy of peace-making. This is important not only in celebrating a distinctive national contribution to the global good, but in establishing Wales's identity as a Nation of Peace.

Establishing our identity as a Nation of Peace however, is not only about the narratives we relate but also about what we do and how we do it. It is about how relationships are conducted, about using dialogue as a way of life, about being open to different perspectives and beliefs, and about seeking cooperation rather than conflict with others whether they are like-minded or not. And it is not just a series of policy initiatives for Government to enact and targets for it to reach, but a direction of travel which involves the whole of society including local government and civil society organisations - many of which are part of broader international coalitions and make significant contributions to peace.

Internationally, the Welsh Government is already explicitly committed to establishing Wales as a globally responsible nation, and there can be no more globally responsible act than promoting peace. Although the UK Government has reserved powers on foreign, defence, security and international development policy, there is still scope for the Welsh Government to act internationally. The Welsh Government has powers over education and culture, both of which can be used to establish dialogues and promote peace, as well as the ability to add

its voice to global debates. It has also provided practical support for international development such as the 'Wales and Africa' programme, while its 2019 *Refugee and asylum seeker plan*, which aims to establish Wales as the first 'Nation of Sanctuary', demonstrates how innovative thinking can create opportunities to act internationally.

Wales's international activities are not limited to the Government in Cardiff. Civil society organisations, including the peace movement in Wales, universities and schools (especially through the *Taith* programme) all have opportunities to act internationally and can play a role in promoting peace.

Wales's disproportionate contribution to the UK's military and its defence industrial base might appear to be at odds with the aspiration for it to be a Nation of Peace. However, European nations recognised as 'peace nations' (in particular Norway, Sweden and Switzerland) maintain substantial militaries and defence industries, and all have mandatory military conscription for young people. Being a Nation of Peace therefore suggests the need for a complex and nuanced relationship with the military and defence industry.

Devolution provides the Welsh Government with significant powers which can advance positive peace in Wales and set an example internationally. Successive Welsh Governments have introduced legislation which can be seen as providing the basis for Wales as a Nation of Peace while, in the context of the UK Government's post-Brexit repeal of the *Human Rights Act (1998)* and the introduction in 2022 of a *Bill of Rights* to the Westminster Parliament, the Senedd has been proactively exploring a discretely Welsh approach to protecting and upholding human rights for all people living in Wales.

The Welsh Government also has significant powers over education which creates opportunities for developing positive peace within schools, while other organisations provide opportunities to make peace part of a school's everyday life. Adult Learning Wales (ALW) offers a Global Learning course free of charge for people living and working in Wales, and has recognised the importance of Peace Education programmes in post-16 education. Although university research is not a devolved responsibility, and incentives to promote research relating to peace are lacking, there is evidence that peace research – broadly defined – does exist in Welsh Universities and mechanisms exist in Wales which would allow it to be promoted more effectively.

Following the example set by the Welsh Government's seven Well-being Goals, six Peace Goals for Wales can provide the framework for a National Manifesto for Peace, which would have a legislative basis similar to that of the *Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act (2015)*. The six Goals are:

- Good relations with neighbours.
- Good governance including low levels of corruption, the free flow of information and high levels of media literacy.
- Social justice, including equitable distribution of resources and respect for human rights.
- Sound and ethical business environment with high levels of human capital.

- The promotion of those cultural values that respect difference and promote tolerance.
- Protection of the natural environment.

The details of these should be developed as part of a national conversation leading to a National Manifesto for Peace. In developing this, Wales can lead the world.

Recommendations

1. Wales can and should aspire to become a Nation of Peace - in order to establish itself as a globally responsible nation, to raise the profile of Wales internationally, to build stronger communities within Wales, and because peace has a value in its own right.
2. The Welsh Government should be active in promoting peace internationally by supporting international development; by adding its voice to global debates on peace; by using education and culture to open up conversations; and by establishing international partnerships characterised by dialogue and respect.
3. There should be a national dialogue, led by both government and civil society, on how Wales can develop as a Nation of Peace and contribute to the vision of a better world. This should lead to a National Manifesto for Peace, which should have a legislative basis like that of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act (2015).
4. This national conversation and Welsh Government policy should be underpinned by a framework of six 'Peace Goals for Wales':
 - i. Good relations with neighbours.
 - ii. Good governance including low levels of corruption, the free flow of information and high levels of media literacy.
 - iii. Social justice, including equitable distribution of resources and respect for human rights.
 - iv. Sound and ethical business environment with high levels of human capital.
 - v. The promotion of those cultural values that respect difference and promote tolerance.
 - vi. Protection of the natural environment.
5. Wales has the historical and cultural legacy to establish its identity as a Nation of Peace, but this needs reinforcing. National institutions – such as the National Museum and the National Library – should do more to promote this legacy, while innovative means of further embedding an identity based on peace should be encouraged.
6. Being a Nation of Peace is about maintaining relationships based on dialogue and respect. This requires a whole society approach to build a culture which emphasises partnerships rather than rivalries and seeks cooperation rather than conflict with others, whether they are like-minded or not.
7. Specific opportunities exist for Welsh Government to take a lead in promoting a culture of peace, not least with public services in Wales. Examples may include: adopting positive peace as a cross-cutting theme for public service commissioning and grant funding; the explicit inclusion of positive peace in the seven Well-being Goals and in the remit of the Future Generations Commissioner; and including the promotion of positive peace in the terms of reference for Public Service Boards.
8. Wales should promote an understanding of peace through education at various stages of development. Although much of the responsibility for this lies with Welsh Government, other bodies can make important contributions, while international accreditation through the UNESCO ASPNet programme should be promoted more widely.
9. Although university research is not devolved to Wales, the Welsh Government should examine how it can promote and highlight peace research in Wales.
10. Wales's international activities are not limited to the Government in Cardiff. Civil society organisations in Wales, some of which are part of broader international coalitions, should continue to make significant contributions to peace both in what they say and do.
11. Wales should begin a conversation on: how we can balance our aspirations as a progressive nation promoting peace with our obligations to the security of the UK? How economic benefits from the defence industry support well-being in communities in Wales but with costs elsewhere? And what 'defence' and 'security' means for the people of Wales. This should be supported by additional research.

About Academi Heddwch Cymru

Academi Heddwch Cymru is Wales's national peace institute and is the first of its kind in the four nations of the United Kingdom. It belongs to a global family of peace institutes that bring together expertise to serve with the common aim of using peace-rooted approaches to global challenges.

Academi Heddwch aims to extend Wales's long-standing tradition of peace-making and peace-promotion by developing and coordinating an independent community of researchers in related fields. Funded by the Welsh Government but independent, Academi Heddwch works to place peace firmly on Wales's national agenda as well as on the international stage.

Academi Heddwch's aims are to ensure that:

- Wales makes an internationally recognised contribution to peace research and practice.
- A focus on peace is seen in relevant Welsh Government strategies and policies.
- There is strong public engagement with peace research and practice in Wales.

Academi Heddwch was established in 2020 and is an alliance of the 9 Universities in Wales, Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, the Learned Society of Wales, and the Welsh Centre for International Affairs (WCIA). It is also supported by representatives from the peace movement in Wales, Race Council Cymru, Urdd Gobaith Cymru, Rotary International, and the Office of the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales.

Background

This report was commissioned by Academi Heddwch Cymru (Wales's Peace Institute). Academi Heddwch Cymru gratefully acknowledges the support of the Welsh Government and that of the Welsh Centre for International Affairs (WCIA) in developing this report.

Background research for this report was undertaken by Richard Newton Consulting, with additional input from Academi Heddwch Cymru staff. The report also draws on the conference organised by Academi Heddwch Cymru and the Welsh Centre for International Affairs on 'New Perspectives and Learning on the Nature of Peace' in May 2023,¹ and the report from the Flemish Peace Institute, *Peace in Foreign Policy: Peace Nations in Times of Crisis*.² We are grateful to our colleagues in the Flemish Peace Institute for discussing these issues with us.

Lead author for the report was Colin McInnes, Research Network Lead for Academi Heddwch Cymru. Support and additional material were provided by Jill Evans, Mererid Hopwood, Bethan Siân Jones, Hayley Richards and Rowan Williams.

¹ See <https://www.wcia.org.uk/academi-heddwch-cymru/new-perspectives-learning-on-the-nature-of-peace/>

² Merel Selleslach & Maarten Van Alstein, *Peace in Foreign Policy: Peace Nations in Times of Crisis* (Brussels: Flemish Peace Institute, 2024).

Introduction

Peace matters for Wales. The Welsh Government's current International Strategy talks explicitly about Wales establishing itself as a globally responsible nation,³ and there can be no more globally responsible act than promoting peace. The International Strategy also states that a key ambition is to raise Wales's international profile. We believe that becoming a Nation of Peace will significantly enhance our international profile, as it has for other 'peace nations' in Europe such as Norway, Sweden and Switzerland and provide Wales with a distinct identity on the international stage. Being a Nation of Peace means emphasising cooperation over conflict and partnership over rivalry, not only internationally but within our own country. It will also have a positive impact upon how we govern ourselves as a devolved nation with diverse communities and interests. But perhaps above all, Wales as a nation and its Government should promote peace because it has value in its own right.

The need for peace is as pressing now as ever before with conflicts, including those in Gaza, Myanmar, South Sudan and Ukraine, proliferating across the world. This is recognised by the United Nations in its 2023 policy brief *A New Agenda for Peace*.⁴ Though a small nation, and one without full delegated powers, there are real opportunities for Wales to act as a global leader in promoting peace across the world, something which we explore in this report.

Wales has a long history of expressing concern over weapons and war – not least from the 1923 Women's Peace Appeal to the 2023 Senedd vote on the Gaza conflict. Although foreign policy, international trade and defence are powers reserved to the UK Government, the Welsh Government and civil society have important voices which can contribute to, and help shape, UK and global opinion. Wales has also shown – historically and more recently – an ability to act in an innovative manner to promote peace, such as with the Nation of Sanctuary Plan.⁵

Peace, however, is more than the absence of war (the kind of peace that is sometimes called 'negative peace'). It is about societies living without fear, about social resilience alongside individual rights, and about social justice, fairness, respect and equality to build a better world. It is about shifting our frame of reference from national security and the interests of the state to human security – the freedom from fear and the freedom from want by communities and by individuals. This is what is termed 'positive peace' (for an example of what positive peace may mean in practice, see Figure 1).

Since devolution, we have had a greater ability to promote positive peace within Wales. The aspiration of making Wales a Nation of Peace is in accordance with the current Welsh Government's priorities and the *Programme for Government 2021–26*.⁶ This report identifies the considerable progress Wales has made, but it argues that more can and should be done to promote positive peace and to make Wales globally recognised as a Nation of Peace.

Research for this report shows that a strong foundation already exists for Wales to become a Nation of Peace through the legacy the people of Wales have inherited, and through recent legislation such as the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act (2015).⁷ The strong links between positive peace and well-being

means that some of the Well-being Goals established in the Act also provide a firm basis for Wales to move forward on the path of positive peace, especially the Goals of:

- a prosperous Wales
- a more resilient Wales
- a healthier Wales
- a globally responsible Wales.

Peace however involves more than delivering the Well-being Goals, and so this report aims to facilitate a national dialogue, led by both government and civil society, on how Wales can develop as a Nation of Peace and contribute to the vision of a better world.

Figure 1: The Pillars of Positive Peace as illustrated by the Institute of Economics and Peace⁸



³ See <https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-10/international-strategy-for-wales-v1.pdf> p.4

⁴ See <https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/our-common-agenda-policy-brief-new-agenda-for-peace-en.pdf>

⁵ See https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-03/nation-of-sanctuary-refugee-and-asylum-seeker-plan_0.pdf

⁶ See <https://www.gov.wales/programme-for-government-2021-to-2026.html>

⁷ See <https://www.gov.wales/well-being-of-future-generations-wales>

⁸ See <https://www.economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/PPR-2022-web.pdf>

Nations of Peace

Globally, a number of states have made conscious decisions to place peace firmly on their national agendas, making peace part of their national identity and a key value for which they are recognised. In Europe, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland are all considered 'peace nations', while further afield Costa Rica in 1948 abolished its military after a civil war and reallocated its defence budget to other areas including education and culture, thus becoming known as a 'peace nation'.

These nations rarely define 'peace' beyond a general acceptance of an absence of war and promotion of non-violent means of conflict resolution – though this does not prevent some peace nations such as Norway and Sweden from being members of military alliances.

Crucially however, peace is seen by these states as something which evolves as part of a national dialogue, with diverse approaches accepted in an inclusive manner. In describing peace nations in Europe, the report from the Flemish Peace Institute states:

[w]hile defending certain norms and values is important, dialogue and reciprocity are also essential factors in building peaceful relations between people and countries. Peacefulness and reciprocity are characteristic of the kinds of relationships and the quality of the relationships a country develops within the frame of peace-oriented foreign policy. Peace, then, is not only a value to be promoted; it is also a relationship. In that sense, states actively practice peace by developing peaceful relations with partners, be they like-minded or not.⁹

Peace therefore is not simply a policy, but part of a state's identity and 'a relationship to practice'.¹⁰ Nevertheless, a number of policy tools have been identified as common to these states in their promotion of peace. These are:

1. participation in international peace mediation
2. cooperation in and support for international development
3. promotion of multilateralism and the rules-based international order
4. controls on arms exports, and
5. undertaking cultural and educational activities.

How these policies are expressed are not uniform but vary over time and according to national context. Further, they are not always simple in their execution – both Norway and Sweden for example have significant arms industries and the export of arms is controlled rather than banned. Nevertheless, these five tools do give a distinctive policy orientation and reflect how the values expressed by these states translate into concrete policy outcomes.

⁹ Selleslach & Van Alstein p. 26.

¹⁰ Selleslach & Van Alstein, p.31.

¹¹ Selleslach & Van Alstein, p.7.

In addition to peace nations, sub-state groups have explicitly adopted peace as part of their identity; informing not only their values but the policies they implement. These include regions with varying degrees of self-governance and 'Mayors for Peace' which include almost 8,400 cities.¹² Although these sub-state groups have often very limited formal powers with regard to foreign and defence policy, they can and do engage in activities to promote international peace through what is called 'para-diplomacy' (see Figure 2). These may include educational and cultural activities as well as statements condemning violence which contribute to a 'global voice'. Since peace for their cities and regions is more than the absence of war, the policies which they are able to implement can be significantly informed by ideas of positive peace. These may include environmental practices, the promotion of social justice, encouraging freedom of expression, and promoting inclusivity.

Box 1: Para-diplomacy

Para-diplomacy emerged as an idea in the mid-1980s to describe the increased role of non-central governments on the international stage. The rise of federalism in particular led to increased numbers of regional governments, many without formal roles in foreign or defence policy, but whose international presence was nevertheless growing. Non-state actors, including regions and major cities, are now widely recognised as actors on the international stage despite lacking the legal standing of states.

Source: Mariano Alvarez, 'The Rise of Paradiplomacy in International Relations', *E-International Relations* <https://www.e-ir.info/2020/03/17/the-rise-of-paradiplomacy-in-international-relations/>

¹² See <https://www.mayorsforpeace.org/en/> and please note that in Wales, Aberystwyth, Bala, Caerphilly, Cardiff, Gwynedd, Newport, St Asaph & Carmarthen are all members of Mayors for Peace.

The Legacy of Peace in Wales

History and culture are fundamental building blocks in the construction of a nation's identity, and understanding the role this plays in being a Nation of Peace is vital. Establishing and promoting the legacy of peace-making in Wales is therefore important not only in celebrating a distinctive national contribution to the global good, but in establishing Wales's identity as a Nation of Peace.

For more than a century, the people of Wales have undertaken innovative – sometimes world-leading – initiatives to promote peace. Many, but not all, of these have been the result of the actions of individuals or civil society groups. This focus on civil society is in no small part because of the limited powers available to Wales's governments (local and national) prior to devolution. With new powers for a national government arising from devolution, the scope for further innovation and a clearer identity as a Nation of Peace has vastly increased.

Examples of the legacy in Wales of promoting peace include:

1. The establishment in 1919 of the first professorial chair in international politics anywhere in the world at Aberystwyth University to help prevent future wars.
2. The 1922 message of peace and goodwill to the world from the children of Wales which continues today with the annual message from Urdd Gobaith Cymru.
3. The 1923 Welsh Women's Peace Appeal to the women of the United States of America, signed by 390,296 women from across Wales (a third of the nation's female population at the time).
4. In 1926, the International Federation of League of Nations Societies – the 'third arm' of the League – met in Aberystwyth, with delegates from 40 nations working towards the goal of world peace.
5. The opening in 1938 of the Temple of Peace and Health in Cathays, Cardiff.
6. Under the Directorship of Rev Gwilym Davies, the Welsh Association for Education in World Citizenship developed a draft constitution for what would ultimately become UNESCO, whose aim is to build peace through education, science and culture.
7. The campaign in 1946-48 against proposals to develop the Preseli mountains into a permanent military training ground.
8. The march against nuclear weapons by women from Cardiff to Berkshire which resulted in the establishment of the Women's Peace Camp at Greenham Common in 1981.
9. The refusal of Welsh County Councils in the early 1980s to participate in the UK Government's instruction to draw up civil defence plans including for possible nuclear war and in 1982 'Datganiad Clwyd', the 'Nuclear Free Wales Declaration' designated Wales as the first nuclear-free nation in Western Europe in 1982.

10. Prominent campaigns by the peace movement in Wales over the past 4 decades, which have focussed on anti-nuclear and anti-war causes, often operating collaboratively through networks such as Cymdeithas y Cymod (the Fellowship of Reconciliation in Wales), CND Cymru, the Welsh wing of the Peace Pledge Union (PPU), and faith-based collectives including Cytûn and Crynwyr Cymru/Quakers in Wales.
11. Heddwch ar Waith (Peace Action Wales), established in 2023 and funded by the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust to provide a forum for the peace movement.

Individuals associated with the promotion of peace include Annie Hughes Griffiths, chair of the Welsh League of Nations Union, who delivered the Welsh Women's Peace Petition to the US; David Davies of Llandinam, who endowed the Wilson Chair at Aberystwyth University and the Temple of Peace and Health in Cardiff; Henry Richard and his 40 year-long tenure as Secretary of the Peace Society (1848–1884), whose work on the global stage in promoting arbitration between nations gave him the title 'Apostle of Peace'; Richard Roberts, co-founder of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation; George M Ll Davies who was closely associated with the Peace Pledge Union; and the women who led the march against nuclear weapons from Cardiff to RAF Greenham Common. The promotion of peace also features prominently in Welsh culture, from the work of writers and poets such as T H Parry-Williams, Gwenallt, Waldo Williams and Menna Elfyn, to the ceremonial 'Sword of Peace' at the Gorsedd and the Peace Message at the Llangollen International Eisteddfod.

Wales therefore has the historical and cultural legacy to establish its identity as a Nation of Peace.

Wales and International Peace

Despite the granting of devolved powers in a range of important policy areas, it initially appears that the Welsh Government currently has few, if any, levers to promote peace internationally - it is inextricably linked to the UK Government, which has reserved powers on foreign, defence, security and international development policy. However, there is scope for the Welsh Government to act internationally. Not least in that the Welsh Government has powers over education and culture, both of which can be used to establish dialogues and promote peace, as well as the ability to add its voice to global debates as it has done in the 2023 Senedd vote on the Gaza conflict (see Box 2). It has also provided practical support for international development such as the 'Wales and Africa' programme,¹³ while its 2019 *Refugee and Asylum Seeker Plan*,¹⁴ which aims to establish Wales as the first 'Nation of Sanctuary', demonstrates how innovative thinking can create opportunities to act internationally.

Box 2 Senedd Vote on the Gaza Conflict

A recent example of the complexity of the relationship between powers which are devolved to Wales and those reserved for the Westminster Government was the Senedd's vote in respect of calling for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza (8th November 2023). Whilst Labour as the party of government offered a free vote to its backbenchers, Welsh Ministers abstained. This was to be expected as Welsh Ministers typically abstain on voting on issues where powers are reserved. The vote was carried without Ministerial support, and whilst it is unlikely to directly change the local situation in Gaza, it is illustrative of Wales's ability to generate diplomatic messaging in respect of international peace.

This does not mean that all opportunities have been taken – for example, the Welsh Government's *Taith* programme enables educational exchanges for students and staff but does not emphasise the promotion of peace. Though some of the projects funded by it did successfully incorporate the promotion of peace into their activities, this was not identified as a mission or priority for *Taith*.¹⁵ In contrast the EU's Erasmus+ programme, which the UK was part of before Brexit and which *Taith* is intended to replace, explicitly aims to support social rights and may therefore be seen as promoting positive peace.¹⁶

Importantly, Wales's international activities are not limited to the Government in Cardiff. Civil society organisations in Wales, some of which are part of broader international coalitions, make significant contributions both in what they say and do.

¹³ See <https://www.gov.wales/wales-and-africa>

¹⁴ See <https://www.gov.wales/refugee-and-asylum-seeker-plan-nation-sanctuary>

¹⁵ See <https://www.gov.wales/taith-international-learning-exchange-programme>

¹⁶ See <https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/about-erasmus/what-is-erasmus>

A current example of this concerns the siting of a deep space radar in Pembrokeshire. In December 2023, the UK Government announced its intention to build a new radar facility at the Cawdor Barracks near St David's as part of the AUKUS DARC programme.¹⁷ The programme intends to track objects in space, 'detecting potential threats to defence or civilian space systems'.¹⁸ Concerns over the local impact as well as the militarisation of space has led to the establishment of an active civil society group – Pembrokeshire Against the Radar Campaign against Deep Space Advanced Radar Capability, (PARC against DARC)¹⁹ – while local government is also considering whether to grant planning permission (though the UK Government might be able to override local planning on national security grounds).

The DARC programme raises the broader issue of military bases in Wales. The background research conducted for this report identified that, with 5% of the UK's population, Wales contributes 9% of the UK's service personnel; and although just 2% of service personnel are based in Wales, there are over 60 bases and other military establishments located in Wales (for a list of bases and other military establishments in Wales, see Appendix 2). This appears to sit poorly with an ambition to be a Nation of Peace.

The Welsh Government also invests heavily in military capabilities through their trade and investment strategy. High-value manufacturing (including aerospace) and cyber-security are amongst the priority sectors that contribute to the defence industry in Wales.²⁰ It is estimated that over 160 companies employ more than 20,000 people in various activities, providing infrastructure for arms development, research, and production.²¹ Local talent, enterprise zones and generous financial incentives to support companies to locate and expand their operations in Wales have encouraged high-profile businesses to operate within Wales. These include: BAE Systems, GE Aviation, Rolls Royce, General Dynamics, Raytheon, Qioptiq and the Airbus Group. Moreover, centralised Ministry of Defence spending has been identified as disproportionately high in Wales compared to other parts of the UK when analysed on a per capita basis.²² These economic benefits are not insignificant and can make an important contribution to social well-being.

The Welsh Government also explicitly commemorates Wales's own 'proud military tradition and history',²³ and funds remembrance events and exhibits. Although activities such as the annual Remembrance Sunday can be important reminders of the costs of war, thereby emphasising the need for peace, it could be argued that they may also be seen as valorising sacrifice in war.

An additional consideration regarding the presence of the military in Wales is that a number of veterans live here, some of whom sacrificed much for the country, and disinvesting in the military might be seen as an alienating move by them.

Given that Wales makes a disproportionate contribution to both the UK's military and its defence industrial base, it might appear to be at odds with the aspiration for Wales to be a Nation of Peace. In contrast, Costa Rica may be seen as setting an important precedent as a state which gave up its military and invested the savings in other areas including education and culture. On the other hand, those European nations which are recognised as 'peace nations' (in particular Norway, Sweden and Switzerland) maintain substantial militaries and defence industries, and all have mandatory military conscription for young people. Indeed, the background research for this report conducted by Richard Newton Consulting

argued that it would be challenging to envisage a scenario where British Armed Forces jobs are redeployed in the public services.²⁴

Being a Nation of Peace therefore suggests the need for a complex and nuanced relationship with the military and defence industry. It seems unlikely – especially given the nature of the devolution settlement – that Wales can divest itself of both (the military and the defence industry) in the short term, nor might this be necessary to be a Nation of Peace given examples elsewhere in Europe. Rather a conversation is needed on how Wales can balance its aspirations as a progressive nation promoting peace with its obligations to the security of the UK and to the service veterans living in Wales, and how economic benefits from the defence industry support well-being in communities in Wales but with costs elsewhere.

¹⁷ See <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-deep-space-radar-will-transform-uk-security>. AUKUS is the trilateral security partnership between Australia, the UK and the US with a particular focus on the Indo-Pakistan region. DARC is the Deep Space Advanced Radar capability to be based over 3 sites, the first of which (in Australia) will be operational in 2026.

¹⁸ *ibid.*

¹⁹ See <https://parcagainstdarc.com/>

²⁰ See <https://tradeandinvest.wales/key-sectors>

²¹ See <https://www.aerospacewalesforum.com/defence>

²² See <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201919/cmselect/cmwelaf/128/128.pdf>

²³ See <https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-06/welcome-to-wales.pdf>

²⁴ See <https://www.gov.wales/labour-market-overview-march-2024>

Positive Peace in Wales

Although foreign and security policy remain reserved powers for the Westminster Government, Wales does now have considerable powers in other areas which can advance positive peace in Wales and set an example internationally. In this context, successive Welsh Governments have introduced legislation which can be seen as providing the basis for Wales as a Nation of Peace. These include:

1. The *Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act (2015)*²⁵ which establishes seven 'well-being goals' and five 'ways of working' which are applicable to 48 public bodies in Wales. These are underpinned by the sustainable development principle, and which are overseen by the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales and their office. Although the Well-being Goals and the Five Ways of Working do not explicitly refer to peace, there is a clear synergy between these objectives and the concept of 'positive peace'.
2. The 2023 Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act²⁶ addresses improving public service delivery and well-being in Wales. The Act expects that public services should be run and paid for in a responsible way and that services should improve people's lives. It requires that commissioning public services should be done in a fair way with consideration for the long-term impact decisions have on people's well-being. It is intended that the Social Value Partnership Council will link into the planning of the Well-being Goals, ensuring public bodies evidence that providers operate responsibly and contribute towards Wales's Well-being Goals.
3. The Programme for Government 2021-2026 Ten Well-being Objectives which placed requirements upon all public bodies in Wales to deliver against the over-arching Well-being Goals, working in tandem with the Goals to improve people's lived experience of becoming and remaining well.²⁷

In addition, the Welsh Government states clearly that 'human rights in general, [and especially] the Human Rights Act and European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) have been at the heart of devolution in Wales'.²⁸ In the context of the UK Government's post-Brexit repeal of the *Human Rights Act (1998)*,²⁹ and the introduction of the *Bill of Rights* to Parliament,³⁰ the Senedd has been proactively exploring a discretely Welsh approach to protecting and upholding human rights for all people living in Wales. Welsh Government policy also underwrites human rights through indirect incorporation, namely:

1. Rights of Children and Young People (Wales) Measure 2011³¹
2. Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014³²
3. Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018³³
4. Wales Specific Equality Duties and associated Equality Impact Assessments³⁴
5. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015³⁵
6. Socio-Economic Duty (2021) under the UK Equality Act 2010³⁶

Additionally, inequalities experienced by communities marginalised due to protected characteristics has been addressed by a number of policy initiatives, including:

1. Nation of Sanctuary Plan (2019)³⁷
2. Advancing Gender Equality in Wales Plan (2020)³⁸
3. Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan (2022)³⁹
4. LGBTQ+ Action Plan for Wales (2023).⁴⁰

Notwithstanding this work, research carried out for the Welsh Government identified a lack of alignment and implementation within the current legislative and policy framework on human rights and equality, and a degree of disharmony between human rights and well-being in policy and practice across Wales.⁴¹

Devolution also provides the Welsh Government with significant powers over education which bring with them opportunities for developing positive peace. The new (2022) Curriculum for Wales for example introduces cross-cutting themes which include human rights, diversity, and local, national and international contexts. These provide opportunities for introducing positive peace into curriculum design, enabling learners to develop a citizenship which is 'multifaceted, reflecting on their roles and responsibilities and recognising the diversity'.⁴² Additionally, the concept of *cynefin*, which is part of the Curriculum for Wales, can be used to contribute to a strong sense of community and belonging for learners,⁴³ while the Government's March 2023 roadmap for the education system introduces the aim that 'all learners, whatever their background, are supported to be [engaged]... and ethical citizens, ready to play a full part in life and work'.⁴⁴

Alongside the national curriculum, the Welsh Centre for International Affairs (WCIA) delivers a national Peace Schools scheme with support from Academi Heddwch Cymru.⁴⁵ This scheme supports schools in developing peace as a cross-curricular theme and as part of the school's everyday life. The UNESCO Associated Schools Network (ASPnet) links educational institutions across the world around a common goal: to build the defences of peace in the minds of children and young people.⁴⁶ Over 100 schools in the UK are part of this network, including some schools in Wales.⁴⁷ Adult Learning Wales (ALW) also offers a 10-week Global Learning course free of charge for people living and working in Wales, and has recognised the importance of peace education programmes in post-16 education.⁴⁸

In the Higher Education sector, the University of Wales Trinity Saint David and the Guerrand-Hermès Foundation for Peace jointly founded the Global Humanity for Peace Institute in 2021. The Institute conducts research in the areas of peace and peacefulness and plans to provide a forthcoming Masters Programme on Peace Studies.⁴⁹ Welsh Universities have conducted a range of relevant research studies and projects, some funded by external bodies, and submitted 10 Impact Case Studies to REF 2021 which concerned peace. Significantly more research is undertaken in Welsh Universities associated with positive peace than is explicitly identified as such, but this is largely unrecognised as such because of the lack of incentive to do so. Until recently academic research in general (including

knowledge exchange and innovation) has been largely uncoordinated, not only between but even within Welsh Universities. However, following a 2018 report by Graeme Reid into research funding in Wales,⁵⁰ Welsh Universities have been collaborating more closely in research and innovation, not least through WIN (the Wales Innovation Network). This establishes a more permissive environment for collaboration, while the Welsh Government-funded Academi Heddwch Cymru is establishing a network of peace researchers across Wales, linked to international partners and research networks. It is therefore clear that opportunities exist to leverage the talent within Welsh Universities to promote peace – both in research and teaching – and that some elements already exist, but that incentives are generally lacking in what has become a highly competitive sector.

²⁵ See <https://www.futuregenerations.wales/about-us/future-generations-act/>

²⁶ See <https://www.gov.wales/social-partnership-and-public-procurement-wales-act>

²⁷ See <https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2022-01/programme-for-government-update-december-2021.pdf>

²⁸ See https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2022-03/human-rights-act-reform-a-modern-bill-of-rights_0.pdf

²⁹ See <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/human-rights/human-rights-act>

³⁰ See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bill-of-rights-bill-documents>

³¹ See <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/mwa/2011/2/contents>

³² See https://www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2014/4/pdfs/anaw_20140004_en.pdf

³³ See <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2018/2/contents>

³⁴ See <https://www.gov.wales/public-sector-equality-duty-html#:~:text=Those%20subject%20to%20the%20duty,and%20those%20who%20do%20not>

³⁵ See <https://www.futuregenerations.wales/about-us/future-generations-act/>

³⁶ See <https://www.gov.wales/socio-economic-duty-overview>

³⁷ See https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-03/nation-of-sanctuary-refugee-and-asylum-seeker-plan_0.pdf

³⁸ See <https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-03/advancing-gender-equality-plan.pdf>

³⁹ See https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2022-06/anti-racist-wales-action-plan_0.pdf

⁴⁰ See <https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2023-02/lgbtq-action-plan-for-wales.pdf>

⁴¹ See <https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/statistics-and-research/2021-08/strengthening-and-advancing-equality-and-human-rights-in-wales-summary.pdf>

⁴² See <https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/designing-your-curriculum/cross-cutting-themes-for-designing-your-curriculum/#local,-national-and-international-contexts>

⁴³ Susan Chapman, Rosy Ellis, Gary Beauchamp, Lisa Sheriff, David Stacey, Jane Waters-Davies, Adam Lewis, Catherine Jones, Merris Griffiths, Sammy Chapman, Rachel Wallis, Elizabeth Sheen, Tom Crick, Helen Lewis, Graham French and Stephen Atherton 'My picture is not in Wales': pupils' perceptions of cynefin (belonging) in primary school curriculum development in Wales, *Education* 3-13, 51:8, 1214-1228, 2023 <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/03004279.2023.2229861> See also <https://www.gov.wales/final-report-black-asian-and-minority-ethnic-communities-contributions-and-cynefin-new-curriculum>

⁴⁴ Our National Mission: high standards and aspirations for all, Welsh Government 21 March 2023; <https://www.gov.wales/our-national-mission-high-standards-and-aspirations-all-html> accessed 18 December 2023

⁴⁵ Welsh Centre for International Affairs. 'Peace Schools' <https://www.wcia.org.uk/global-learning/peace-schools-in-wales/> accessed 06.12.2023.

⁴⁶ See <https://www.unesco.org/en/aspnet/need-know>

⁴⁷ See <https://www.adultlearning.wales/en/course/51245#>

⁴⁸ See <https://www.learningandwork.wales/news-and-policy/peace-education-in-adult-learning/>

⁴⁹ See <https://ghfp.institute/positive-peace/>

⁵⁰ See <https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-04/review-of-government-funded-research-and-innovation-reid-review.pdf>

Assessing Progress towards Wales as a Nation of Peace

For our background research, Richard Newton Consulting analysed Wales's current performance in positive peace by using the 'pillars' framework designed by the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP, see Figure 1 above). We have summarised this in Table 1, and provided the more detailed analysis in Appendix 1.

Table 1: Wales as a Nation of Peace – Summary of Current State

| Pillar | Performance (Good, Mixed, Poor) ⁵¹ |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Well-Functioning Government | Mixed-Good. |
| Equitable Distribution of Resources | Poor-Mixed. |
| Free Flow of Information | Mixed-Poor. |
| Good Relations with Neighbours | Mixed. |
| High Levels of Human Capital | Mixed-Poor. |
| Acceptance of the rights of others | Good-mixed. |
| Low Levels of Corruption | Mixed-Good. |
| Sound Business Environment | Poor. |

⁵¹ These are rough indications only. Where two values are provided (e.g. mixed-poor), this means that the balance is in the former but with significant elements of the latter.

This analysis suggests that, although there has been significant progress towards positive peace in some areas and that some policies will improve Wales's performance further, much still needs to be done.

However, an important caveat is that this framework is designed to analyse the performance of states and not of devolved nations, and many of the performance indices reflect the situation in the UK as a whole rather than Wales (for more detail, see Appendix 1). Further, in its 2022 Report the IEP provides a detailed case study of what it describes as the UK's 'poor' performance, ascribing much of this to the (potentially transitory) tensions over Brexit. It concludes that '[i]t is possible for the UK to reverse these trends in the years ahead. But it will require clarity and resolution from authorities, as well as policies that promote the inclusion of different societal views.'⁵² Nevertheless in its 2024 'league table' (the Global Positive Peace Index), the IEP assessed that the UK had fallen from 18th in 2022 to 20th place (out of 163 states). In contrast the three most heavily recognised 'peace nations' – Norway, Sweden and Switzerland – all occupied places in the top five.⁵³

Towards Wales as a Nation of Peace

There is no ready-made blueprint for a 'Nation of Peace', rather much depends on national contexts. Although existing peace nations in Europe share some commonalities in their approach to foreign policy, peace is about more than external relations – it is also about how a nation and its communities live together, their values and their aspirations for a better world. What it means to be a Nation of Peace will therefore differ from state to state because of the diversity in national contexts. Although we do identify certain broad principles below which are likely to be shared by Nations of Peace, the particular flavour – priorities, interpretation, implementation – will vary from state to state.

This report demonstrates that Wales has the clear potential to be a Nation of Peace. Moreover, policies such as the *Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015* and the commitment to net zero demonstrate that the Welsh Government is capable both of innovation and visionary leadership with transformational potential.

Three key insights should underpin how we understand Wales as a Nation of Peace.

First, being a Nation of Peace is not about structures or even policies – it's about identity. How that identity is expressed will vary according to national contexts, but in all cases it is about the ongoing iterative relationship between how a nation sees itself (narratives and the stories it tells itself about its own identity) and what it does (that is, its policies, who and what it supports and how it acts and reacts in times of crisis). Establishing such an identity for Wales would not only provide an inspiration for action but should define who we are as a nation.

Second, being a Nation of Peace is about relationships and how they are conducted. As the report from the Flemish Peace Institute argues: 'Peace is not only a value to promote but also a relationship to practice. By looking for cooperation and reciprocity wherever possible, peaceful relationships are strengthened and promoted.' Being a Nation of Peace therefore requires dialogue as a way of life, and being open to different perspectives and beliefs. It involves building partnerships rather than rivalries and seeking cooperation rather than conflict with others, whether they are like-minded or not.

Third, being a Nation of Peace is not simply about a series of policy initiatives for the Government to enact; rather it is an ongoing process. It is about a direction of travel rather than a set of targets to be reached. What it means in practical terms to be a Nation of Peace will evolve over time, as societies change and new challenges emerge. But the underpinning principles are likely to be the same, namely those of non-violence, cooperation, social justice, respect and fairness.

It is clear from this that becoming a Nation of Peace cannot be a top-down process achieved through legislative instruments or declarations alone – though leadership by the Welsh Government will be critical. Rather it will involve engaging with civil society and the people of Wales. It is also about establishing a clear narrative as a Nation of Peace, using our history and culture but also by supporting peace education at all levels – including schools, adult learning,

⁵² See <https://www.economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/PPR-2024-web.pdf> p.48.

⁵³ *ibid*, p.10.

⁵⁴ Selleslach & Van Alstein, p.31.

further and higher education. Specific opportunities may exist for Welsh Government to take a lead, not least with public services in Wales, so that peace becomes a part of who we are. Examples may include: adopting positive peace as a cross-cutting theme for public service commissioning and grant funding; the explicit inclusion of positive peace in the seven Well-being Goals and in the remit of the Future Generations Commissioner; and including the promotion of positive peace in the terms of reference for Public Service Boards. It will also involve support for and engagement with civil society groups.

The Welsh Government can be active in promoting peace internationally. Although foreign and defence remain reserved powers for the Westminster Government, the Welsh Government has been able to act, albeit in a limited way, to promote international development through initiatives such as the 'Wales and Africa' programme and support for Disasters Emergency Committee Cymru. Wales can also add its voice to global debates on peace, as it did in the 2023 Senedd debate on the Gaza conflict. The Welsh Government also has important levers at its disposal, especially in the fields of education and culture, to open conversations with international partners, so that these relationships are characterised by dialogue rather than power. We would also encourage consideration of how the promotion of peace can be incorporated into existing programmes, such as the Well-being Goals and *Taith*. New initiatives to embed peace even more firmly in the national identity might include establishing permanent exhibitions on Wales's heritage of peace at the National Museum and at the National Library.⁵⁵

Establishing our identity as a Nation of Peace is not only about the narratives we relate however, but also what we do – and not only Welsh Government but also local authorities can play an important role here. Following the example set by the Well-being of Future Generations Act and its seven Well-being Goals, we propose six Peace Goals for Wales which should underpin policy development:

1. Good relations with neighbours.
2. Good governance including low levels of corruption, the free flow of information and high levels of media literacy.
3. Social justice, including equitable distribution of resources and respect for human rights.
4. Sound and ethical business environment with high levels of human capital.
5. The promotion of those cultural values that respect difference and promote tolerance.
6. Protection of the natural environment.

⁵⁵ Currently the National Library of Wales's substantial archival collection on peace is promoted only through a basic webpage on 'War and Peace', which does not feature on its homepage. See <https://www.library.wales/welshpoliticalarchive/archives-by-theme>. A small archive and exhibition on Wales and peace is also housed at the Temple of Peace and Health in Cardiff, alongside prominent web resources. See <https://www.wcia.org.uk/peace-heritage/>.

The details of these should be developed as part of a national conversation leading to a National Manifesto for Peace, which should have a legislative basis similar to that of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act. We believe that in developing a National Manifesto for Peace, Wales can lead the world, and especially other sub-state regions, in how it promotes peace.

A particularly complex issue concerns the defence industry and the presence of British Armed Forces in Wales. Wales relies on the economic contribution of a number of industries related to the British Armed Forces and defence-related goods. It is also home to a significant number of British Armed Forces bases, and Armed Forces' families are a component of communities across Wales. Civil society in Wales supports veterans and serving forces through charitable support and remembrance activities. Much of this presence could be said to be at odds with ambitions in relation to the vision of Wales as a Nation of Peace.

We do not at present have a clear understanding of how important military bases and other defence establishments in Wales are both for the UK armed forces and the local economy. Similarly, we do not know the potential for arms conversion and diversification programmes – such as the New Lucas Plan⁵⁶ – in providing a way forward in reducing reliance on the defence industry in Wales. Nor we do know the extent of the cultural impact on Wales – including both positive and negative aspects – and how much policy flexibility exists in this context with the UK Government in London, especially when local planning regulations are involved. However, an important precedent for reimagining Welsh industry has already been set with the Welsh Government's plans for net zero by 2050.

Academi Heddwch Cymru therefore proposes to undertake a major research programme exploring the role of the military and defence industry in Wales including its impact on the economy, security, culture and communities, and within the constraints of the devolution settlement. Such research would involve input from civil society in Wales, local and national government, industry, and the UK Government, to provide Wales and the Welsh Government with a clear set of recommendations supported by evidence.

⁵⁶ The New Lucas Plan is an arms diversification strategy developed from the 1976 Lucas Plan. Faced with cost-cutting and redundancies, shop stewards at Lucas Aerospace in the mid-1970s developed proposals on how to change the company from concentrating on the declining defence market into focussing on more socially useful products. See <https://lucasplan.org.uk/>

Appendix 1: Wales as a Nation of Peace: Current State

Source: Richard Newton Consulting 2024

| Pillar | Performance |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Well-Functioning Government | <p>Wales's devolved government is currently led by a minority Labour Government.</p> <p>The Senedd Cymru (Members and Elections) Bill, proposed by the Special Purpose Committee on Senedd Reform, and endorsed by the majority of Senedd Members in 2022 will see significant changes to the way the Senedd, and politics in Wales operates.⁵⁷ The Welsh Government claims the changes will improve the way the Senedd functions, and strengthen democracy in Wales. There is opposition to the Bill from the Welsh Conservatives, and the cost is likely to be around £18m according to Government figures.</p> <p>These changes are designed to improve the way the government operates, and, if successful, would contribute to the well-functioning government identified as an essential pillar of Positive Peace.</p> <p>The reserved powers model of devolution means that Welsh Government does not have complete control over its laws, or income -factors that affect the nation's ability to achieve Positive Peace.</p> <p>How well, or otherwise, the Welsh Government functions is due in part to its relationship with Westminster, given the financial ties, and their reserved powers. The Bennett Institute for Public Policy states that between 2016 and 2019 there was a notable deterioration in the relationship between devolved governments and central government in London.⁵⁸ They go on to note Boris Johnson's more combative approach to this relationship, taking decisions through Brexit negotiations which affected devolved nations capacity for regulatory autonomy.</p> <p>Funding decisions relating to Levelling Up were similarly dismissive of devolved decision making.</p> <p>This attitude was further highlighted in the Covid-19 Public Inquiry, where evidence was given that Boris Johnson claimed it was 'optically wrong' for him to hold regular meetings with the leaders of the devolved nations, and that ministers in Westminster feared Covid could become a 'federalist Trojan Horse'.⁵⁹</p> <p>A disharmonious relationship with UK Government will naturally impact how well the Welsh Government can operate and how well they can collaborate to deliver for people in Wales.</p> |

⁵⁷ See <https://www.gov.wales/plans-modern-more-representative-senedd-published>

⁵⁸ See <https://www.bennettinstitute.cam.ac.uk/blog/uk-and-devolved-governments/>

⁵⁹ See <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/ministers-feared-federalist-trojan-horse-covid-inquiry-devolved-nations/>

| Pillar | Performance |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Equitable Distribution of Resources | <p>The Welsh Government has applied the Socio-Economic Duty,⁶⁰ requiring specified public bodies to consider how their decisions might help reduce the inequalities associated with socio-economic disadvantage. Government data suggests that single parent households are more likely to be in material deprivation; and children eligible for free school meals have poorer educational outcomes than their non eligible peers – this gap widens at GCSE level. The Gender Pay Gap in Wales is narrowing, as is the ethnicity, and disability pay gaps. People aged 16-24 are now more likely to report feeling lonely than those over 65 years, and those with limiting disabilities, LGBTQ+, and those who are not White British, are all more likely to report feeling lonely. Healthy life expectancy continues to be worse for people living in deprived areas.</p> <p>Children are the population group most likely to experience relative income poverty – 31% of children in Wales experienced this between 2017-2020, compared with 18% of pensioners.⁶¹</p> <p>In 2021-22, 11 % adults were classed as materially deprived (unable to afford to keep their homes warm, make regular savings or have an annual holiday) – however this data preceded the current cost of living crisis.⁶²</p> <p>Levels of persistent poverty (relative income poverty for a period of 3 out of 4 consecutive years) in Wales for adults reached 12% between 2016 and 2020.⁶³</p> <p>The Equality Trust also shows that wealth is unevenly spread across Great Britain.⁶⁴ The UK has one of the highest levels of income inequality in Europe. Median total household wealth in Wales (April 2018-2020) was £275,700 against a figure of £503,400 for the South East of England, and £168,500 for the North East.</p> <p>This data suggests that equal distribution of resources in Wales is far from being achieved.</p> |

⁶⁰ See <https://www.gov.wales/more-equal-wales-socio-economic-duty.html>

⁶¹ See <https://www.gov.wales/wellbeing-wales-2022-more-equal-wales.html#103973>

⁶² See <https://www.gov.wales/wellbeing-wales-2022-more-equal-wales.html#103973>

⁶³ See <https://www.gov.wales/wellbeing-wales-2022-more-equal-wales.html#103973>

⁶⁴ See <https://equalitytrust.org.uk/scale-economic-inequality-uk>

| Pillar | Performance |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Free Flow of Information | <p>In March 2021, the Senedd’s Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee concluded that the ‘supply of media content for Wales is inadequate’,⁶⁵ particularly in relation to news and current affairs.</p> <p>A study in 2020 for the Department for Digital, Culture, Media, and Sport found that local journalism is critical for the scrutiny of democracy.⁶⁶</p> <p>Welsh newspapers are on the decline – since 2008 the Western Mail’s circulation has reduced by more than 75%, The Daily Post’s circulation has halved, and this reflects the performance of national daily newspapers.</p> <p>In response to this and other similar findings, and in an attempt to support the media sector, Welsh Government announced funding to support local journalism in June 2023.⁶⁷</p> <p>However, funding of just £200,000 is unlikely to be sufficient to reverse the decline in local journalism, and therefore scrutiny of democracy. With ever more people turning to unregulated social media platforms for their news, it is more important than ever that more substantial steps are taken to preserve the free flow of information in Wales.</p> |
| Good Relations with Neighbours | <p>An island nation, the UK does not directly border any other country. While there are disagreements in terms of issues of independence, devolution, and national identity within the UK, there is currently no civil unrest, or likelihood of such, between Wales and the other three nations.</p> <p>Brexit has naturally impacted relationships with our closest neighbours in Europe, particularly in terms of barriers to trade, the economy, labour movement, and foreign policy. However, while these have a significant impact on life in Wales, there is unlikely to be significant unrest as a result.</p> <p>Wales however has a longstanding tradition of civic protest against weapons and war, while the Senedd’s vote on Gaza in 2023 indicated its willingness to exert influence on conflicts elsewhere (however limited).</p> |

| Pillar | Performance |
|------------------------------|--|
| High Levels of Human Capital | <p>Knowledge, skills, and health are key components of Human Capital. We know that poverty has a significant impact on people’s educational attainment, health, and life expectancy and so there is a negative impact on the levels of human capital available in Wales.</p> <p>However, Welsh Government has taken steps to improve human capital through its positive actions including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Youth Engagement and Progression Framework 2. Youth Justice Implementation Plan 3. Healthy Wales Obesity Strategy 4. Equality Plan 5. Cymraeg 2050 6. Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence strategy 7. Equality, race, and Disability Strategy 8. Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan 9. LGBTQ+ Action Plan 10. Period Proud Wales Action Plan 11. Strategy for an Ageing Society 12. Quality Statement for Women & Girls Health 13. Well-being of Future Generations: Continuous Learning and Improvement Plan. |

⁶⁵ See <https://senedd.wales/media/vjpf0f4/cr-ld14207-e.pdf>

⁶⁶ See https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5f7b4673e90e070dec5d9e29/Plum_DCMS_press_sector_dynamics_-_Final_Report_v4.pdf

⁶⁷ See <https://www.gov.wales/read-all-about-it-new-funding-support-local-journalism-wales>

| Pillar | Performance |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Acceptance of the rights of others | <p>Wales's position as a Nation of Sanctuary, and work including Anti-Racist Wales action plan, LGBTQ+ action plan, Period Proud Wales action plan, and the Well-being of Future Generations Act all combine to create an image of Wales that is accepting of, and a champion for the rights of others. However, in terms of hate crimes in Wales in 2020-22:⁶⁸</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Race was judged to be a motivating factor in 66% 2. Sexual Orientation was a factor in 19% 3. Transgender identity was a factor in 4% 4. Disability was a factor in 11%. <p>There is clearly more work to do in terms of the acceptance of the rights of others in Wales.</p> |
| Low Levels of Corruption | <p>The UK has fallen seven places to 18th on Transparency International's corruption perceptions index.⁶⁹ The erosion of public trust in UK Government is likely to bleed into Welsh politics.</p> <p>Transparency International cited a "growing list of problems" in the UK including contracts for PPE during Covid-19, scandals including Tory MPs Chris Pincher and Owen Paterson, the high turnover of Prime Ministers in 2022, Partygate, and the appointment of politically connected people to public sector roles during the pandemic. They highlight the appointment of an ethics advisor by Rishi Sunak as a positive step. However, the perception of corruption in the UK is bound to affect the public's perception of corruption in Wales as well.</p> |

⁶⁸ See <https://www.gov.wales/wellbeing-wales-2022-more-equal-wales-html#103973>

⁶⁹ See <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/jan/31/uk-global-corruption-index-transparency-international-qatar-russia-brazil>

| Pillar | Performance |
|----------------------------|---|
| Sound Business Environment | <p>The Wales Centre for Public Policy describes the structural characteristics of Wales's economy as:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Its population is older, in poorer health, and has lower levels of educational attainment and skills than the UK average 2. It has a larger public sector 3. There are few major economic centres, and they are not well connected to the rest of Wales or the UK 4. The effects of large-scale deindustrialisation and the move away from traditional industries are still being felt 5. There is limited fiscal devolution and a small tax base, with few obvious sources of new revenue. <p>The economy, as a basis for a sound business environment, therefore, has some significant weaknesses that are not likely to be addressed in the short or medium term.</p> |

⁷⁰ See <https://www.wcpp.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/WCPP-Evidence-Briefing-The-Welsh-economy-skills-and-infrastructure.pdf>

