



The Wales we want to see

Our Response to the Future Generations Report

Abramson et al. March 2021





Introduction

Race Alliance Wales (RAW) is an initiative which aims to act as a collaborative and self-directed platform for individuals and organisations interested in achieving race equality in Wales. The RAW membership currently consists of 56 organisations and 114 individuals. Our commitment is to work collaboratively with our members, organisations, public bodies and Welsh Government to improve the lives and outcomes for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities in Wales.

As we reflect upon the past year, we continue to see the dismal impact of systemic racism upon Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) people. COVID-19 highlighted the stark, pre-existing inequalities in society and certainly was not the 'grand leveller'¹ that many described. COVID-19 disproportionately impacted those from BAME communities in every way imaginable. Many BAME children and young people faced acute barriers to home learning due to digital poverty. Many BAME people worked in key worker roles meaning they could not work from home. Of course, there are also the many BAME people who sadly lost their lives to COVID-19.

During 2020, we also saw the emergence of the Black Lives Matter movement, engaging people all over the world to foreground the negative impact of systemic racism upon everyday lives. It is heartening to see people come together to raise their voices and campaign for change. But this struggle, and the struggle of those who came before us, will not result in easy solutions overnight. We have a duty to commit ourselves to sometimes uncomfortable conversations and reflection in order to produce long term plans for change. We must all continue to collaborate, connect and share resources in order to overcome the structural inequalities in Wales affecting future generations.

We have taken the time to carefully respond to *the [Future Generations Report 2020](#)*² to foreground a race perspective within some of your recommendations and statements. We hope these insights can help shape some of your future areas of focus. We have responded solely to your six upcoming areas of focus, as recommended by Sophie Howe, during RAW's meeting with the Future Generations Commissioner on 6th November 2019. We welcome further discussions upon our response, as well as previous areas highlighted by the RAW membership.

¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/apr/09/coronavirus-inequality-managers-zoom-cleaners-offices>

² We are responding to the Future Generations Commissioners 'Executive Summary' primarily, utilising the full report for further clarity under some headings. All references made within this response, including page references, pertain to the executive summary report.



Land use planning and placemaking

We welcome the concept of 'placemaking' in relation to planned land uses, in order to promote future places to live, connected with key services, transport, employment opportunities, as well as promoting community, health and wellbeing.

We support the Future Generations Commissioner's recommendation to Welsh Government to utilise the Equality Impact Assessment to address inequality in Local Development Plans (Future Generations Report, 2020: 99).

Potential impact upon equality for future generations – in relation to land use planning and placemaking – is incredibly important to consider, as it cross cuts many of the Wellbeing goals, in particular **Prosperous, Resilient, Healthier, More Equal** and **Cohesive Communities**.

Continued accountability for public bodies is needed when considering land use planning in relation to the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales). Even though the Act promotes the importance of *involvement* of people who will be impacted, many public bodies continue to make high impact decisions with low levels of engagement with those involved.³ If we consider the recent Cardiff Council decision to demolish the established 'Paddle Steamer' café in Butetown, Cardiff to provide social housing. Of course, affordable housing is important to ensure the health and well-being of our communities. However, suggestions by the community to integrate a café into the proposed social housing were rejected – despite hundreds of people signing a petition to consider a café integrated into the social housing design.

This is only one example of those from BAME communities, in Wales, *not being listened to*. If the community had been consulted at an earlier stage a resolution could have been reached whereby housing is provided, but not at the expense of demolishing a popular community hub for Yemeni and Somali communities to meet up, socialise and support the wider community. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic the Paddle Steamer café has provided food parcels to vulnerable people in need.

The Future Generations report has offered many examples of good practice with involving communities in land use planning and placemaking (Future Generations Report, 2020: 107). However, these examples are small scale and public bodies have a duty to do more. We can also look outside of Wales to see good practice of involving communities, empowering some to access funds to purchase local heritage and green sites, such as the Scottish Land Fund.⁴

We call for additional pressure to be placed upon public bodies in Wales to involve communities in decision making in meaningful ways. Involvement should not be a 'tick box'

³ Planned Military Museum in Cardiff Bay <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/dec/15/military-museum-dumped-people-cardiff-aldershot>

⁴ <https://www.gov.scot/policies/land-reform/scottish-land-fund/>



or solely extractive exercise. Public bodies must value people's lived experience and knowledge of what is working and what could improve in their communities. Objectors should have the same rights as developers to appeal to the Planning Inspectorate, with the Local Planning Authority bearing the cost. By valuing experiences and perspectives from people living in these communities, we can build places through the vision of those who will be impacted by changes the most. Meaningful involvement and engagement can counter inequalities through planning development and implementation.

Transport

We welcome the Future Generations Commissioner's focus upon transport as one of the key areas to achieve the well-being goals – a **Resilient Wales**, a **Prosperous Wales**, **A Wales of Cohesive Communities**, a **More Equal Wales** and a **Healthier Wales**.

We would like to highlight the need for *affordable and reliable transport*, particularly for those who face socio-economic deprivation, including asylum seekers, who live on severely restricted budgets.

Another area we would like to highlight is *safety* across public, and low carbon footprint, modes of transport. Unfortunately, public transport such as buses and trains experience high incident reports of hate crime in Wales, including racially motivated incidents. According to the British Transport Police, there was a near 30% increase in racially aggravated public order crimes on trains between 2017 and 2019.⁵ As national figures demonstrate, hate crimes across all protected characteristics are on the rise, and racially motivated hate crimes, including Islamophobia, are becoming more prevalent.

We call for the Future Generations Commissioner to consider affordability, reliability and safety in relation to BAME communities, and other protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, in relation to broader plans and recommendations around transport in Wales. The vision of a Wales with fantastic interconnected, low carbon emission transport is a future we want to see. However, these transport infrastructures must also be considered in relation to accessibility for BAME communities in Wales. Some constructive ways forward could include free public transport for under 18's across Wales, for all those living on low incomes, as well as mandatory hate crime training for all transport workers to respond to hate crimes efficiently.

Housing

We support the Future Generations Commissioner's call for having good quality homes that meet our needs especially in relation to long term impacts upon well-being.

⁵ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-52471938>



We would like to highlight the need for an *increase of affordable and social housing* in Wales. One of our key concerns relates to overcrowding, particularly within BAME communities, some of which may have larger family sizes. The COVID-19 crisis has further demonstrated issues around overcrowding as many BAME communities simply do not have the option to socially distance due to cramped living conditions.

We would also like to highlight *considerations of housing for asylum seekers*. We realise that the decision of where to house asylum seekers is not devolved to Welsh Government, but we must foreground the issues arising from inadequate and unsafe housing, upon asylum seekers arriving to Wales. The opening of the Penally camp near Tenby is of particular concern, seemingly reinforcing the viewpoint that asylum seekers are not part of Wales' communities, reinforcing the 'Hostile Environment'. In line with the Welsh Government's 'Nation of Sanctuary Plan', future housing needs should consider the welcome and integration opportunities afforded by appropriate housing and its role in building cohesive communities in Wales.

We call on the Future Generations Commissioner to actively engage with BAME communities in Wales in relation to housing, to ensure recommendations under the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) are made considering the range of living requirements by all communities in Wales.

Decarbonisation

Without a doubt, climate change is important to consider when thinking about the current and potential future impact upon people living in Wales. Climate change continues to impact those facing socio-economic deprivation, with many affected by health conditions relating to air pollution. It is promising to see the Future Generations Commissioner take preventative action in this area to ensure public bodies act now, rather than later. However, we must also recognise the lack of representation of BAME people in activism concerning climate change and decarbonisation.

One of the recommendations to Welsh Government is to '*Tackle the climate and nature crises through a holistic approach, capitalising on the role of young people*' (Future Generations Report, 2020: 126). It has been very heartening to view young activists so passionate about the future of our planet, as demonstrated through Greta Thunberg's initiation of the global 'School strike for climate', as well as organised groups such as Extinction Rebellion. However, what has become quite apparent is the lack of representation of BAME communities within these movements. Many young BAME people do not have the opportunity to skip school to participate in movements such as 'School strike for climate', already feeling the need to work twice as hard to get as far in life, compared with their white counterparts. This double standard in work ethic is prevalent across all ages, with some wanting to avoid being active



in issues for fear of being labelled a troublemaker.⁶ As well as these experiences, due to the police and its disproportionate use of force upon BAME people, many may not engage with public protests due to the fear of being singled out and even become a victim of police brutality.

We call on the Future Generations Commissioner to consider representation of BAME young people within the ‘holistic approach’ to tackling climate and nature crises in Wales. We insist upon seeing a commitment to increasing representation and involvement of young people, from all backgrounds, in young person led initiatives driving forward climate change related agendas. For example, if a National Forum of Young People on Climate Change was established in Wales, we would like to see an action plan to engage young people from BAME backgrounds. Our communities must be proactively encouraged to participate at the onset, not as a reactionary afterthought in order to increase BAME representation.

Adverse Childhood Experiences

The focus upon Adverse Childhood Experiences by the Future Generations Commissioner’s office is hopeful to see. Recognising Adverse Childhood Experiences as impacting future prospects, health and resilience can hopefully equip professionals to take preventative and supportive measures to ensure young people are supported in formative years, rather than taking reactive steps later in life.

We would like to highlight the need to *recognise racism as an Adverse Childhood Experience*. Racism, both covert and overt, can profoundly impact BAME children and young people’s identities. Traumatic experiences in their formative years are constantly reinforced throughout adult life and can result in serious issues around confidence, self-esteem and general mental health.

We would also like to highlight the *urgency of specialist support needed for asylum seekers and refugee seeking children and young people arriving in Wales*. There is a serious lack of appropriate language and culturally catered support for asylum seeking and refugee young people, many of whom have experienced adverse events leading up to their arrival in Wales.

We call on the Future Generations Commissioner to seriously consider Adverse Childhood Experiences utilising a more nuanced approach in relation to race. We agree with the recommendation for public bodies to ‘Look at the whole system and replace competition with compassion – interventions should be dealing with the person, not the specific issue.’ (Future Generations Report, 2020: 136) However, we feel that standardised training is not enough, and specialist training is needed to ensure professionals are equipped to support all manner

⁶ In Race Alliance Wales’ peer-led research paper [Do the Right Thing: achieving equity in racialised representation in public and political life in Wales](#), many respondents spoke about the need to work ‘twice as hard’ as white counterparts to be taken seriously, as well as the fear of being deemed the ‘troublemaker’ or ‘angry black person’ when voicing their opinion (Usmani et al. 2021).



of issues relating to racism, trauma of forced migration, and the intersections of both these issues when considering asylum seeking young people arriving and growing up in Wales.

Skills

We appreciate the Future Generations Commissioner's focus upon skills in Wales of both young and older demographics. As illustrated in the Future Generations report, technology is progressing very quickly and now is the time to ensure our future generations are equipped with the skills, to ensure a **prosperous, healthier and more resilient Wales**.

The new Curriculum for Wales is an exciting development to ensure the development of resilient and informed young people who can, under the four purposes be 'ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world'.⁷ The input of learner's voices within the new curriculum is promising but it must be noted that the new Curriculum for Wales, if utilised correctly, could afford an opportunity to counter systemic racism through content and delivery of subjects within schools. The Welsh Government have established a working group to review gaps in teaching and training relating to themes around BAME communities and Cynefin.⁸ We feel this is an exciting time within our Welsh education landscape and a good opportunity to advocate for public bodies in Wales to commit to greater representation and accurate portrayal of BAME people in the curriculum and wider institutions across Wales, such as the arts and heritage. This commitment extends far beyond including BAME representation in the curriculum. This commitment encapsulates broader plans, including training teaching staff, to value BAME histories.⁹

We would also like to highlight the accessibility and provision of technology and data for BAME communities in Wales. As the COVID-19 crisis has demonstrated, many BAME school children have had lack of access to reliable internet and devices to continue their studies at home. Even once there was provision for devices and internet dongles for young people, the local authorities and schools didn't always make sure they were accessed by BAME families. Many third sector organisations, such as EYST Wales, acted as a bridge in order to communicate information about provision, sometimes in alternative languages, to ensure young people accessed what they needed in order to continue their studies.¹⁰ Again, there is an implementation gap between policy and practice, from government to local authority level, sometimes resulting in a 'postcode lottery' for young people.

⁷ <https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/designing-your-curriculum/developing-a-vision-for-curriculum-design/#curriculum-design-and-the-four-purposes>

⁸ <https://gov.wales/black-asian-and-minority-ethnic-bame-communities-contributions-and-cynefin-new-curriculum-working/terms-reference>

⁹ Interim Report: https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-11/black-asian-minority-ethnic-communities-contributions-cynefin-new-curriculum-working-group-interim-report_2.pdf

¹⁰ EYST Wales Response to Children, Young People & Education Committee Inquiry (2020, June 24) <http://eyst.org.uk/assets/all-wales-eyst-forum-covid-impact-on-young-peoplesubmission-to-cype-inquiry.pdf>



We call for the Future Generations Commissioner to highlight barriers facing BAME people in relation to achieving their full potential, which are underpinned by systemic racism in Wales. Now is the time to call out systems that promote white hegemonic processes and representation. For example, challenging Eurocentric curriculums and recommending a more representative view of Wales – through political representation as one example – can build a **More Equal Wales.**

Health and Wellness system

We welcome the Future Generations Commissioner's 'Vision for a Healthier Wales in 2050 – a shift to prevention and a national wellness system.'

We would like to draw attention to our manifesto for an anti-racist Wales¹¹ and highlight the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on BAME people in Wales due to clear cut socio-economic disparities created and perpetuated by decades of systemic racism within governing bodies of Wales.

The vision for a healthier Wales in 2050 is underpinned by many other areas such as housing, employment and education. We feel that we will not reach a healthier Wales in 2050, for *all* Welsh people, without addressing the structural inequalities in Wales perpetuated by systemic racism.

We call on the Future Generations Commissioner to make a commitment to tackling systemic racism in Wales. Highlighting inequalities in regard to race as underpinned by the inequalities in our systems is the starting point to ensure future generations are **Healthier, Resilient** and **Prosperous** in a **More Equal Wales**, for all.

The COVID-19 crisis has only highlighted the inequalities that are already experienced by BAME people living in Wales. Now is the time to act and prevent further damage for future generations in regard to race. It is promising to see Welsh Government's 'Build Back Better' and 'Race Equality Action Plan' in development stages. However, we do not want to be highlighting the same issues in decades time. We call on the Future Generations Commissioner to recognise, measure and plan – in line with our manifesto for anti-racism – when making future recommendations to public bodies in Wales.

Working together to build the Wales we want

The interconnected goals for the Wales we want to see for our future generations are cross cutting. The people living in Wales are diverse, unique and facing a broad range of intersecting challenges and experiences. There is a need for the Future Generations Commissioner to consider the complex issues faced by people in Wales, across all protected characteristics,

¹¹ From Rhetoric to Reality: Our Manifesto for an Anti-Racist Wales <https://racealliance.wales/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Our-Manifesto-for-an-Anti-Racist-Wales.pdf>



and ‘ground’ the big ideas proposed within the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales). We can of course learn from other countries and share best practice. However, let us not forget to look inwards at our own systems and institutions in Wales, evaluating the effectiveness of public bodies to serve the needs of BAME communities.

Promising steps have been taken in the initial four years of the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales). The legislation is ambitious, preventative and forward thinking. We share the hope and vision to create a Wales that we all want to live in, now and in the future.¹² For this vision to become a reality, there is an urgency to close the implementation gap between policy and practice.

RAW isn’t just a talking shop. We are all about *action*.

We appreciate that change takes time, and we are thankful to all of those that have come before us to advocate for changes to counter deep and entrenched inequalities around race. We also appreciate all of those former and current allies who speak up in spaces that we may not reach. We are calling on the Future Generations Commissioner to utilise her position of power and to be bold and brave when making recommendations to public bodies in Wales.

We have responded to your upcoming areas of focus to ensure our response to your report is accessible for your team and the office’s upcoming priorities. Of course, there are many other areas that we feel are important in regards the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales), as have been previously outlined to the Commissioner. In addition, we want to highlight that the Welsh Government have not yet published their progress to reaching the Well-being milestones. Once milestones are published, we would suggest measurements of progress take equality issues into account.

RAW is committed to continue working with the Future Generations Commissioner to ensure BAME people are involved, heard and seen, to reach the vision for a Wales we (all) want.

We welcome discussions moving forward and are happy to assist the Future Generations Commissioner’s team.

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¹² Well-being of Future Generation (Wales) Act 2015 – The Essentials
<https://www.futuregenerations.wales/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/150623-guide-to-the-fg-act-en.pdf>