



Canolbwynt Iechyd
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Health and
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Be the Change Well-being Goals Challenge

A SERIES OF CHALLENGES TO SUPPORT WALES' SEVEN WELL-BEING GOALS

Each and every one of us has a part to play in securing the future of our planet and in 'being the change' towards the Wales we want for our current and future generations.

Our actions today are already impacting on tomorrow; let's make sure it's a positive impact!

This e-guide has been produced by the Health and Sustainability Hub (Public Health Wales) to inspire people to act and live more sustainably.

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Our planet, our home, is in crisis. Increasingly, we are confronted with the effects of climate change and biodiversity loss, from floods to forest fires, and the devastating impact this is having on human and non-human life. We have experienced a global pandemic that has brought untold suffering and loss, along with many challenges. Overall, it brings us a stark warning – our exploitation of nature will [increase the likelihood of future pandemics](#). We need to radically rebalance our relationship with nature. We have already shown that we can make huge changes to the way we live, work and move when confronted with a global crisis. This demonstrates what we can achieve when we work together in solidarity.

The pandemic has created opportunities, such as reducing air pollution through active travel and home working, and generated the momentum for a green and just recovery. Lockdowns and social distancing measures have forced us to reflect on the simple things we sometimes take for granted, such as time spent with family and friends, access to healthy food and the importance of local green space. All of which support our health and well-being. It has also brought into stark relief the impact of ‘business as usual’ activities, for example, we experienced [cleaner air](#) as a result of reduced traffic on our roads and global carbon emissions [dropped temporarily by 8.8%](#) due to reduced economic activities and travel.

We have a window of opportunity in which to act and build on the appetite for change. In 2020, a [YouGov survey](#) showed that only 6% of people wanted to return to a pre-pandemic economy. In a report from [Climate Assembly UK](#), the people’s assembly on climate action, 93% agreed that steps should be taken across society to encourage lifestyles compatible with net zero.

Confronted with the challenges we face, it is difficult to know what we can do as individuals to help alter our course and not feel defeated and powerless.

However, change is possible. It is true that system change is essential, but we are all individuals living and working within those systems and that is where change can begin.

It should be some comfort to know that societal change can occur when a particular behaviour reaches a ‘[critical mass](#)’ of 25% of the population.

This means that the behaviour of just a quarter of the population can help create a new, widespread social norm that goes way beyond the minority.

So, do not be put off by the sheer enormity and complexity of the situation – **individual actions do count and are hugely important.**

Small acts can have a big impact and together, they can be transformational.

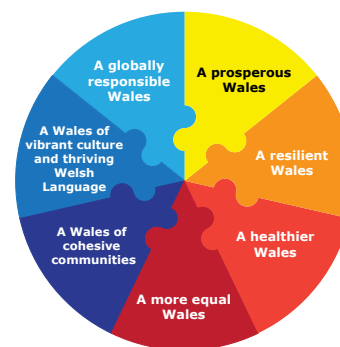
Drawing on Wales’ [Well-being Goals](#) and the wider [United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs), the Be the Change Well-being Goals Challenge sets out six separate behaviour change challenges that inspire us to act.

You can compete on your own, challenge your team mates or go team-to-team on a 7-day challenge, or you can commit to a longer-term challenge, such as Slow Fashion or Ethical Consumer.

Whatever you decide, the sustainable steps in each challenge are there to guide you. But remember, these steps aren’t finite, so imagination and creativity is encouraged!

The challenges are:

1. **Slow Fashion**
2. **Plant-based Diet**
3. **Towards Zero Waste**
4. **Healthy Travel**
5. **Ethical Consumer**
6. **Supporting Wildlife**



Wales’ seven Well-being goals

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WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

The [environmental and social](#) impact of the fashion industry is startling. It produces more greenhouse gas than **all international flights and maritime shipping combined** – that's 1.2 billion tonnes – and it's the second largest polluter of water globally, accounting for 20% of industrial waste water.

Synthetic textiles, such as nylon and polyester, which are made using petroleum or petrochemicals, shed around 700,000 microfibres with each domestic wash. It is estimated that this puts around **half a million tonnes of micro-plastics into our oceans every year**. Once in the marine habitat, aquatic organisms, such as plankton, eat the fibres, which are then eaten by fish and other aquatic animals, contaminating the food chain. A recent [study](#) also found that **83% of drinking water samples** from around the world were contaminated with microplastic fibres.

In the UK, we have the highest clothing consumption rate in Europe, and what happens to all these garments once they lose their shape or appeal? They usually end up being landfilled or incinerated. In 2018, the UK sent **300,000 tonnes of textiles to landfill or incineration**, the majority of which could have been reused or recycled.

Without a doubt, our planet is paying the price for cheaply-made fast fashion, but what about the social impact? Disasters like the [Rana Plaza collapse](#) in Bangladesh, where 1,134 people were killed and many others seriously injured, have shone a spotlight on the working conditions of many garment workers. Many are forced to work long hours for illegally low pay, without access to protective equipment, clean drinking water or sufficient breaks.

[Around 80% of garment workers are female](#) and many report having experienced sexual harassment, verbal and physical abuse whilst at work. Women who become pregnant are often punished with higher production quotas and given more difficult tasks, including standing for long hours.

COVID-19 update

Throughout the pandemic, lockdowns and other restrictions have given us the time and perspective to reflect on our shopping habits and consider what it is we actually need. It has encouraged us to rethink our values and make more [informed, ethical choices](#).

Furthermore, disruptions in supply chains have prompted some fashion brands to adopt more sustainable practices, such as [upcycling or using 'deadstock' fabrics](#). Although prompted by necessity, this shows how the pandemic has accelerated a move towards more sustainable resource use. This is a positive step in the right direction. However, greater, more widespread change is needed to reduce the social and environmental impacts of fast fashion and throwaway culture.

What can we do to support garment workers and reduce our environmental impact?

We can embrace the concept of **slow fashion**. This refers to clothing that is better quality and made to last. It means keeping something in our wardrobes for longer and getting the most out of the item. It also means a living wage for the people who make our clothes and a commitment to more environmentally-friendly production processes.

Initially, fairly-made and durable garments may seem more expensive, but they last longer, so we actually end up saving money! And if you're concerned about cost, fear not! Reuse is a major pillar of the slow fashion movement and, as the majority of clothing discarded by consumers is perfectly wearable, you don't always have to rely on buying new.

Follow these sustainable steps to begin your **Slow Fashion** Challenge!

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- Abide by the **30 wears rule** – if you're not going to get at least **30** wears out of it, don't buy it!
- Wash clothes less often and at a maximum temperature of **30°C** – not only does this use less energy, it increases the lifespan of our clothes and reduces their impact on the planet.
- Forget about the washing machine – pop your jeans in the freezer and remove dirt when frozen.
- Choose organic cotton to reduce the devastating impact of pesticides on human and non-human life. Cotton is a water-thirsty plant, so ensure you get good wear out of whatever you're buying.
- Look for ethical suppliers that ensure a fair wage and decent working conditions.
- Check for certifications. Fairtrade, Soil Association and the Global Organic Textile Standard are just some of the certifications that demonstrate both environmental and social responsibility:
  
- Choose sustainable, natural fibres or fabrics made using closed-loop processes, such as Tencel. The most commonly used synthetic fibre, polyester, uses nearly 70 million barrels of oil in its production and sheds up to 700,000 plastic microfibres with each domestic wash.
- Make do and mend – **clothing repairs** and alterations can make garments last longer and breathe life into ill-fitting clothes.
- Instead of trying to hide repairs, why not make a feature out of them, as in the examples below? Visible mending brings new life to rips, tears and moth-eaten garments in a fun and creative way. Why not challenge your creativity to some **#visiblemending**?
- Buy 'pre-loved' garments from charity shops or vintage markets. This way we can support a circular economy and reduce the demand on the resources and raw materials needed to make new clothes. Online marketplaces are a great source, but be aware - transport and location can influence their overall carbon footprint.
- Mobile technology has transformed the way we shop, but the ability to shop with one click can be highly addictive – remove the temptation from your fingertips and delete any shopping apps from your phone.
- 'Act'ion days - why not organise a Swap-not-Shop event at work or with friends and family? Or a 'Crafternoon' of visible-mending? 'Act'ion days are a great way to share and learn new skills or perhaps take a new pre-loved item home!
- Finally, remembering the waste hierarchy will help you become a slow fashion expert, by **reducing** the amount you buy, **reusing** what you can and **recycling** what you cannot.



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This challenge contributes to at least five of Wales' Well-being goals, 14 UN SDGs and the [Environment \(Wales\) Act 2016](#):



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CHALLENGE 2: PLANT-BASED DIET

The global demand for meat, fish and dairy is fuelling the climate crisis through increasing levels of greenhouse gas emissions. Furthermore, industrial animal agriculture drives ocean acidification and deforestation. This not only threatens habitats and wildlife, but means that oceans and forests are less capable of capturing and storing carbon from the atmosphere.

The **Planetary Health Diet**, presented by the **Eat-Lancet Commission** links diet with human health and the sustainability of the planet.

Although predominantly plant-based, the Planetary Health Diet includes modest amounts of meat, fish and dairy and allows for adaptation to dietary needs, personal preferences and cultural traditions.

COVID-19 update

According to a [survey](#) carried out in 2020, 25% of British Millennials (people aged 21 – 40) say that COVID-19 has made plant-based diets more appealing, as they attempt to make permanent changes to their health and nutrition. Additionally, 12% of the UK population and 22% of Londoners, said they were more interested in adopting a vegan or plant-based diet in the future.

Veganism has risen **360%** in the last decade and, driven by consumer demand, many local shops and supermarkets now stock a wide range of plant-based alternatives. It's easier than ever to reduce meat, fish and dairy, so why not begin by taking part in the 7-day 'Plant-based Diet or Planetary Health Diet challenge. You can increase your intake of vegetables, support animal welfare and reduce your carbon footprint, all whilst eating delicious, nutritious food!

Try the **Plant-Based Diet** challenge or the Planetary Health Diet challenge at home with friends and family or encourage your team mates to take part!

This challenge will hopefully support and encourage people to reflect on their relationship with meat and dairy products, including red meat, and give people a positive experience with a view to changing behaviour after undertaking the challenge to reduce their carbon footprint.



Tofu ramen



Home grown salad with nasturtium and borage flowers



Chocolate and beetroot cake



Plant-based fry-up with scrambled tofu
Photos courtesy of A Kirby

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SUSTAINABLE STEPS:

Use a meal plan to get you started, so you don't have to worry about what to cook from day-to-day. [Veganuary](#) has a great selection to choose from.

Prepare snacks to keep you going when travelling or at work, so you don't get caught out by hunger. We are much more likely to break our resolve when our minds are occupied with other things, so be prepared to help you stay on course.

Substitute your regular dairy milk for one of the many non-dairy milks now available. Oat milk has the lowest carbon footprint of all the alternative milks and you can even get oat cream and crème fraîche. Alternatively, why not have a go at making your own [plant-based milks](#)!

Choose a dairy-free spread which looks and tastes just like butter. Spread it on your toast or use it in your favourite cake recipes in place of butter.

Use [aquafaba](#) (the water drained from a can of beans or chickpeas) as an egg substitute. Whip it up like egg whites to make anything from meringues to chocolate mousse! Or reduce it to make [fresh vegan pasta](#)!

Use alternatives to eggs in baking, such as unsweetened vegan yoghurt, apple sauce, linseeds and chia seeds, to help bind your ingredients.

Try some of the tasty vegan cheeses now available, from Mediterranean style cheeses for Greek salads to cheddar-style cheeses for pizza and pasta.

Do your research. There is plenty of nutritional advice available on following a plant-based diet (and reducing meat intake), so familiarise yourself with the foods rich in essential nutrients.

Experiment with wholefoods such as quinoa, which has a high protein content – about 8.14g per cup. Organic quinoa is also now grown in Wales and is much more affordable and sustainable than quinoa imported from Bolivia. Check this [BBC guide](#) for other high protein plant-based foods.

Use your creativity. Think about how you can adapt your favourite meals to reduce meat, fish and dairy. Thankfully, there are lots of tasty alternative proteins available, e.g. tofu, seitan and tempeh, so you needn't miss out on your favourite meals.

Try adding some coffee to dishes such as meat-free Bolognese to add depth of flavour. This can help provide that richness often associated with meat dishes.

Add some umami! Use ingredients like soy sauce, tamari, balsamic vinegar, miso, vegetable stock and nutritional yeast to help create that delicious, savoury taste. Foods high in umami flavour include dried shitake mushrooms, roasted tomatoes and fermented foods, such as kimchi and sauerkraut. Why not try making your own ferments as a tasty, nutritious side to your plant-based meals?

For those of you with a taste for ice cream, why not have a go at making your own Fairtrade [banana](#) or [cashew nut](#) ice cream? Or try one of the many plant-based alternatives that are now available.

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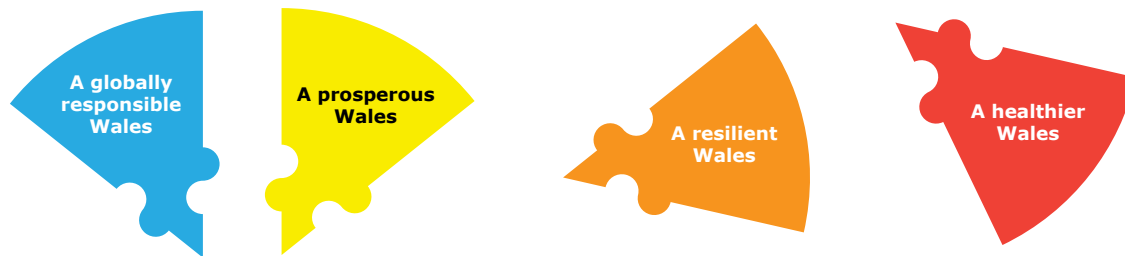
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SUSTAINABLE STEPS:

- Switch to a renewable energy supplier to help keep fossil fuels in the ground and move towards a more sustainable future.
- Where appropriate choose reusable, fabric face coverings, rather than single-use. Why not have a go at [making your own?](#)
- Always carry a reusable water bottle and / or keep-cup. Download the [Refill app](#) to find your nearest Refill station and remember to ask for a reusable cup discount at coffee shops.
- Avoid buying packaged convenience food items, such as ready meals, packaged sandwiches, salads and snacks. This means being prepared and thinking ahead to your next meal.
- Refuse plastic bags, straws, cutlery and any other avoidable single-use items.
- Use reusable food wraps or containers instead of cling film and tin foil.
- Try to avoid buying packaged fruit and veg. A farmers' market or greengrocer is usually a good place to buy them loose and plastic-free.
- Look out for local and seasonal produce to minimise the fuel needed for transport and the energy required to grow out-of-season. Use this [seasonality chart](#) to help guide you.
- If you don't have a plastic-free store nearby, take your own containers or reusable wraps to your local market for buying products such as nuts, cheese, spices and loose tea etc. Most traders will be sympathetic to your request, so don't be shy to ask!
- Ditch plastic sponges and grow your own [loofahs](#) to use in the kitchen and bathroom!
- Reduce food waste by buying only the amount of fresh produce needed for the days ahead.
- Be sure to store food correctly and keep sliced bread in the freezer to toast from frozen.
- Plan your portions so food waste is limited and freeze meals for a later date. Make sure you compost anything leftover, such as vegetable peelings. For more ideas on reducing food waste visit [Love Food Hate Waste](#).
- Monitor the amount of non-recyclable waste produced during the course of a week. This can give a good indication of how much we produce even when we're trying not to!
- Invest in alternative period products or reusable pads. The average woman uses about 11,000 disposable period products in her lifetime and as tampons and pads contain plastic they can persist in the environment for up to 500 years Try this [quiz](#) to find the best one for your body.
- Repair broken items, such as clothing and electronic appliances.
- Borrow instead of buy. Link up with friends to share items such as garden tools or camping equipment.
- Choose refurbished phones, computers and devices over buying new. Mining for mineral elements and the use of plastic in our devices come with a high social and environmental price tag, so choose refurbished items to help reduce impact and save money.
- Be part of the circular economy. Instead of buying new, look for pre-loved items, from clothing to furniture. Why not use your creativity to repurpose, upcycle and renew!
- Invest in a sustainable bamboo toothbrush when your old plastic one needs renewing. Remember to add your old toothbrush to your household cleaning kit.

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SUSTAINABLE STEPS:

- Choose biodegradable cleaning products to keep your home and body clean. You can even use the greywater from shampooing your hair to water your plants!
- Opt for washable cotton pads for cleansing your skin, instead of using cotton wool.
- Invest in an electric razor or a razor with replaceable blades. Over time you can collect the blades in a tin can and add them to your recycling when full.
- Use soap instead of shower gel and hand wash and replace your regular bottled hair products with solid shampoo and conditioning bars. This will make a big dent in the amount of single-use plastics you consume!
- Make sure you turn the tap off whilst brushing your teeth. This can save an average of 200 gallons of water per month, that's equivalent to 44 1-litre pop bottles.
- Save water and energy by reducing the amount of time you spend in the shower. According to [waterwise.org](https://www.waterwise.org) 'if everyone in the UK cut one minute off their shower, we could save 660 million litres of water a day'.

- Switch to an ethical bank to invest your money sustainably with no negative impacts on the environment or society
- Make your voice heard. Connect with your elected representatives about approaches to reducing waste in your community. Others in the community e.g. community councils, councilors can also make a difference.
- Call out bad practice – from supermarkets to coffee shops, challenge excess packaging and disposable single-use items.
- Act collectively – join or establish a [zero waste community](#) in your area.
- For extra inspiration, check out this [wonderful case study](#) from Public Health Wales Senior Public Health Practitioner, Victoria Hannah, on her journey to be plastic-free.

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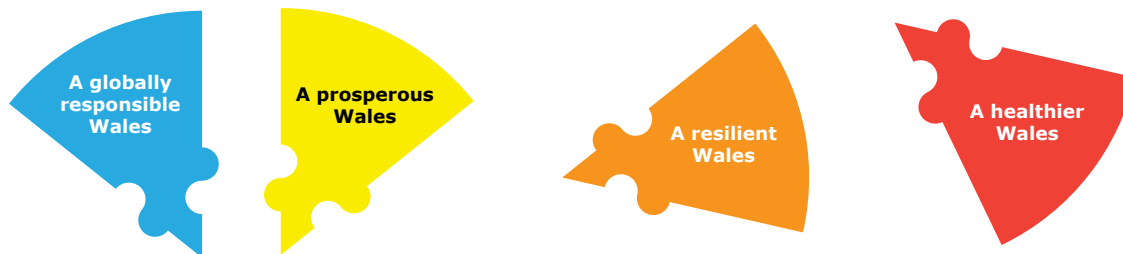
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CHALLENGE 4: HEALTHY TRAVEL

Clean air is essential for health, yet the amount of traffic on our roads is increasing year-on-year. According to the Department for Transport, road traffic in the UK has increased by **8.1% since 2012**. Furthermore, higher rates of nitrogen oxides and air-borne particulate matter, (the combined result of emissions from vehicles, factories and power plants), are associated with increasing levels of **asthma, cardiovascular disease and strokes**.

What's more, children are particularly vulnerable to air-pollution, which can adversely affect their **lung development**, whilst communities in lower-income areas often experience **higher levels of vehicle pollution**.



Image courtesy of John Linton/Sustrans

In the UK, it is estimated that air pollution accounts for up to **40,000 premature deaths a year**. In fact, according to a recent report, air pollution is now responsible for **more deaths than smoking**.

Emissions from the transport sector are also a major contributor to climate change. Although vehicle efficiency has improved, this is offset by an increase in transport. Transport accounts for **13% of total Welsh carbon emissions**, compared to 28% across the UK.

The evidence is clear; we need to drastically reduce the amount we drive and actively engage in more sustainable forms of travel. Not only will this help improve air quality, but it will also improve our **mental** and physical health.

COVID-19 update

When the national lockdown was introduced on 23 March 2020, most of us experienced huge changes to the way we live, move and work. In Wales, less traffic led to **reduced vehicle emissions** and a decrease in **road traffic accidents**. UK wide, cycling levels increased by **up to 300%** and **bike sales by 60%**. We experienced what life might be like with cleaner air and quieter, safer streets, free from traffic.

In addition to the daily journeys we make for work and leisure, we also need to think about travel more widely. For example, can we choose a destination reachable by train or ferry for our next break? Or take a 'staycation'? Or, can we make use of technology to take part in meetings and events to reduce business travel? These days we have a multitude of options available to us.

Follow the sustainable steps to see how you could take part in the **Healthy Travel** Challenge!

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- Participate and advocate for healthy travel. Encourage friends, family and colleagues to drive less and engage in more active forms of travel.
- Support national and international sustainability days, such as, Cycle to Work Day, Clean Air Day and World Car-Free Day.
- Speak to your organisation about its Cycle-to-Work Scheme to help save money and spread the cost of a new bike and equipment or consider purchasing a refurbished bike.
- If you're lucky enough to live in a cycling-friendly neighbourhood, why not embrace the cargo bike? Check out [the parents doing the school run with a box bike!](#)
- Find the best cycling route with the [National Cycle Network](#), which covers 16,000 miles of signed paths for walking, cycling and other activities.
- Make the most of bicycle hire schemes in your area, such as [Nextbike](#) in Cardiff or [Santander Cycles](#) in Swansea.
- Use [Traveline Cymru](#) for up-to-date public transport information and active travel routes across Wales.
- Ditch the diesel! Not only is diesel a Group 1 cancer-causing carcinogen, but it also produces high levels of nitrogen oxides and particulate matter. These tiny particles enter the bloodstream through the lungs and can do terrible damage. According to [Doctors Against Diesel](#), "If you're going to design something that would effectively deliver a toxic substance into the lungs, you couldn't do better than the diesel soot particle."

- If you are considering buying a new car, why not choose an electric vehicle? Government [plug-in grants](#) are available for low-emission vehicles and running an electric car is [considerably cheaper than petrol or diesel](#).
- When planning your next holiday, consider where you travel and how you will get there. Taking a long haul flight generates more than [double](#) the emissions emitted by a family car in a year. Use the free [Carbon Footprint](#) calculator to find out the impact of your holiday travel.
- If you only need the use of a car from time to time, instead of owning one, why not join a car club? Car club models are more fuel efficient, emitting 33% less per km than the average UK vehicle, and you only pay per trip.
- Car sharing is another great way to save money and reduce emissions. Why not consider a car share for your daily commute?
- Explore Wales for free and without the stress of driving! Thanks to a Welsh Government initiative, travel operator [TrawsCymru](#) offer free bus travel* on weekends across Wales. With routes such as Cardiff to Hereford, Swansea to Carmarthen and Bangor to Aberystwyth, there are plenty to choose from! *Please note this service may be put on hold under certain circumstances.

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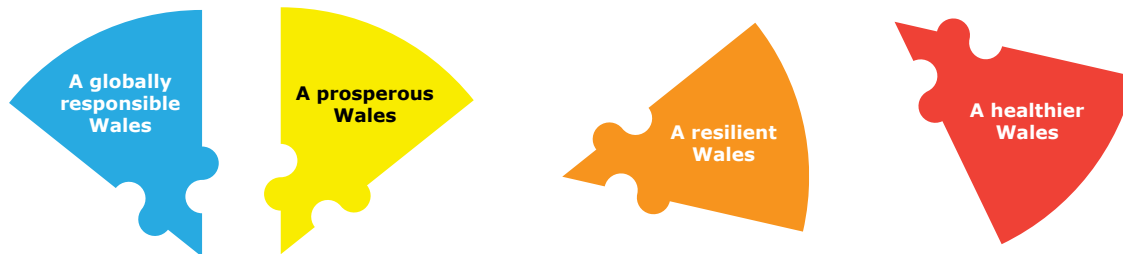
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CHALLENGE 5: ETHICAL CONSUMER

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As consumers we have a social responsibility to make conscious, informed decisions about what we buy and how we buy it. With our individual actions we can help influence markets and send ripples throughout the supply chain. This is consumer power in action. The demand for cheaply made goods perpetuates exploitation, as suppliers compete to drive down prices, but nothing comes without a cost – it just shifts from the consumer to the environment or to the person making those goods, or in some cases, both.

However, if we inform ourselves as best we can about ethical certifications or a company's social and environmental sustainability credentials, we can try collectively to reverse the trend. Of course, it's not always clear cut, as many supply chains can be murky, their processes hidden from view, but there are many ethical suppliers and certifications to help guide us. Here are just a few examples:

Fairtrade



From kitchen cupboard staples, such as coffee, cocoa and sugar to fruit, flowers, clothing, cosmetics and gold, Fairtrade ensures better prices, decent working conditions, local sustainability and fair terms of trade for farmers and workers in the developing world.

By requiring companies to pay sustainable prices Fairtrade addresses the injustices of conventional trade, which traditionally discriminates against the poorest, weakest producers. It enables them to improve their position and have more control over their lives.

Global Organic Textile Standard



To receive this certification suppliers must meet strict ecological and social standards, which cover every step in the chain, from the harvesting of raw materials through to the labelling of garments. It guarantees workers regular employment and a living wage in a safe, clean working environment. Independent certification of the entire textile supply chain ensures that these standards are met.

GoodWeave



GoodWeave is a non-profit organisation that works to end child labour in the carpet industry and to offer educational opportunities to children in South Asia. They have rescued over 6,700 children from labour and provided quality education to over 26,000 rescued and vulnerable children. Goodweave's work helped its creator to win the Nobel Peace Prize in 2014.

The Leaping Bunny



The Leaping Bunny certification guarantees that a product is cruelty-free i.e. no new animal testing has been used in its development, nor has it been used anywhere in its ingredients supply chain. Products that claim to be 'not tested on animals' or 'cruelty-free' without the certification, cannot necessarily guarantee that their supply chains are free of animal testing. Look for the Leaping Bunny on personal care and beauty products, but also animal care and household products, such as detergents and home fragrances.

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©McKay Savage / Women from the Mbini Self-Help Group showing off the fields / CC-by-2.0

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COVID-19 update

The pandemic has [increased consumer awareness](#) and encouraged us to consider the health and environmental impacts of our purchases. A [survey](#) carried out in June 2020 found that 79% of consumers are changing purchase preferences based on social and environmental impacts, with 72% concerned about their environmental footprint and 77% about the humane and fair treatment of workers. However, there is a knowledge gap between the perception and practice of sustainability, with many consumers unaware of the environmental impact of their purchases, e.g. 78% were not aware that it takes **one thousand litres of water to produce one bar of chocolate**. Furthermore, the pandemic has prompted concerns over the safety of reused/refurbished items and refillable packaging, with 40% and 53%, respectively, planning to reduce these types of purchases.

Follow the sustainable steps below to find out how you can make more **ethical purchases!**

- Check the [Eco Label Index](#) for more sustainable certifications and initiatives.
- Look for clothing companies with a focus on sustainability, who design and make affordable pieces using reworked vintage, end of roll fabrics and natural fibres. Or clothing companies who sell garments made of natural, organic and recycled fabrics and follow strict ethical standards throughout their supply chain, from fair pay and conditions for garment workers to animal welfare.
- Choose Fairtrade / ethically-sourced products when doing your weekly shop. When you buy Fairtrade you choose to make a positive impact for farmers, workers and their families.
- Change your workplace tea and coffee club to Fairtrade.

Calling all office tea-clubs!

Is Fairtrade your cup of tea?

As well as enjoying a quality cuppa, buying Fairtrade tea and coffee can also make a difference to people's lives. Fairtrade farmers earn a fair price for their tea and receive training on issues such as gender equality and good farming, together with access to international markets and investment.



Look for this Mark

To make goods more widely available from the high street and supermarkets, you can access a purchasing guide online or e-mail the Health and Sustainability Hub: publichealth.sustainability@wales.nhs.uk

<http://www.nhs.uk/ourwork/ethical-trading/ethical-trading>

We're supporting 

- Participate and be an advocate for fair, ethical trade. Share your discoveries with others via social media and review sites, such as [Trust Pilot](#).
- Look for the [Soil Association Organic Standard](#), which demonstrates good practice and adherence to strict ethical principles, such as, environmental protection and animal welfare.
- Only buy fish or seafood that is MSC certified (Marine Stewardship Council). This guarantees your purchase will be traceable and sustainable.



- Check the [Good Fish Guide](#) from the Marine Conservation Society or download the [free app](#), which uses traffic light warning signals to indicate which types of fish are ok to eat and which should be avoided. It also rates cafés and restaurants that serve seafood, helping diners to make an informed choice.
- Be mindful of [products](#) containing unsustainably produced palm oil. This is responsible for vast swathes of deforestation and the destruction of vital habitat for critically endangered species, such as orang-utans and Sumatran tigers. Palm oil is difficult to avoid – it's in practically everything from baked goods to soap, from fibreboard to biofuel. Furthermore, alternative oils such as sunflower and soybean need even more land to produce the same yields, which, according to the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), could have an [even greater impact on habitats, biodiversity and the environment](#). The best course of action is to keep an eye out for products with an ethical certification, such as the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) certification, whilst trying to reduce your overall consumption.



- If you're thinking of purchasing a new phone, buy a used phone or one with replaceable parts.
- Switch to an ethical bank. Use the [Move Your Money Scorecard](#) to see how your bank rates on the use of tax havens and investments in arms financing and fossil fuels.
- If you really want to get serious, subscribe to [Ethical Consumer](#) to access their ethical rating system, which displays sustainability data on over 40,000 companies, brands and products. If a monthly subscription isn't for you, check out their free [How to Shop Ethically guide](#).

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This challenge contributes to at least five of Wales' Well-being goals and 13 UN SDGs:



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CHALLENGE 6: SUPPORTING WILDLIFE

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In the last few years, we have received stark warnings on the rate of biodiversity decline, with [plummeting insect numbers](#) – including key pollinators essential for crop-pollination – and the loss of many species of plants and animals. According to the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), [60% of animal populations](#) have been lost since 1970. In Wales, the [State of Nature 2019](#) report indicates that 73 species have already been lost, with a further 17% threatened with extinction. All of these studies support the consensus that the earth's [sixth mass extinction event](#) is underway and is due mainly to the impact of human behaviour on the natural world.

The evidence is clear: we desperately need to cultivate a healthier relationship with nature. Nature is not just something that exists on the periphery – it is our life-support. We need it to help [regulate our climate and provide clean air, water, food and medicine](#), all of which support our health and well-being. What's more, protecting nature and biodiversity will help reduce the risk of future pandemics.

Did you know? [Seventy five per cent of all emerging diseases are zoonotic](#) – spread from animal to human – with nature-depleting activities, such as deforestation, increasing the risk of transmission by bringing people and wildlife into closer proximity to one another.

Nature can make an [incredible recovery](#) when given the opportunity, as demonstrated in this example from Carrifran in the Scottish Borders. The first image, taken in 1999, shows bare hills overgrazed by sheep, and the second in 2015 shows a flourishing woodland.



Images courtesy of Borders Forest Trust

As pollution, climate change and the exploitation of natural resources are some of the causes of biodiversity loss, many of the sustainable steps in this guide will help **support biodiversity** (indirectly), as all are intended to lower our rate of consumption and help us make informed choices about what we consume. So, look to them for additional ideas, but follow the steps below to offer nature a helping hand where you live.

COVID-19 update

Social distancing measures, such as regional and national lockdowns, have helped us to garner an appreciation for the wildlife on our doorsteps. During the national lockdown, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds noticed an [increase in the number of people reporting sightings](#) via the hashtag [#Breakfast Birdwatch](#). According to a spokesperson, this was not due to an increase in wildlife, only that people were staying local and had more time to appreciate nature in their neighbourhoods.

Reduced council services meant that many parks and green spaces went unmown, allowing grasses to grow long, [wildflowers to appear](#) and thirsty pollinators to drink and do the important work of pollinating. Furthermore, reduced recycling provision prompted a boom in household composting, with the RHS reporting a [500% increase](#) in 'how to compost' webpage views. Globally, concerns over food insecurity, costs and health have helped boost sales of fruit and vegetable seeds, as families and communities [turn to growing](#) to help supplement their diets.

Regardless of the motivations, these are all encouraging signs that people are starting to value and embrace nature. Furthermore, the pandemic has shone a spotlight on what can happen if we [continue to degrade the natural world](#). However, there is much work to be done to reverse the decline in biodiversity and to ensure equitable access to green space, for health and well-being, throughout our urban spaces.

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SUSTAINABLE STEPS:

- Support wildlife conservation charities, such as the [WWF](#), [RSPB](#) and [Wildlife Trusts Wales](#).
- Be an advocate for nature. Incredible achievements can be made by speaking up and encouraging others, e.g. this [nature reserve](#) built through the collective power of social media.
- Change your search engine to an environmental search engine, to help plant trees or support charities with your web searches.
- When sowing and planting use only organic, peat-free compost. Peat extraction releases huge stores of CO₂, which exacerbates global warming. It also destroys vital habitat for rare birds, butterflies, dragonflies and plants.
- Leave wild spaces where the grass can grow long to provide shelter and habitat for insects and wildlife.
- Use diverse planting to encourage and support pollinators, such as bees, moths, butterflies, hoverflies and beetles. Check the [RHS Plants for Pollinators guide](#) for an extensive list of all-year round flowering plants.
- Create 'hedgehog highways' in fences. Hedgehogs roam up to a mile every night, but garden walls and fences can limit access to food for our prickly friends. Follow this [how-to guide](#) to help make your garden hedgehog-friendly. Hedgehogs also feast on slugs and snails and will keep your pest population under control!
- Build a home for bugs and minibeasts!** This can be made of recycled materials gathered from your garden and will provide habitat for a whole host of garden bugs, including lacewing larvae and ladybirds, which will snack happily on the aphids that colonise your plants!
- Build a compost heap to rot down veg peelings for garden compost or keep a wormery to produce liquid fertiliser.

- Hang out bird houses and feeders and provide access to clean drinking water, e.g. a water feature or small pond, which would also provide habitat for frogs and newts etc.
- Do not use pesticides / neonicotinoids to control garden pests. These kill insects indiscriminately, including bees and other pollinators. They will also kill the birds, hedgehogs and other animals that eat the grubs in your garden. Follow this [link](#) for more information on neonicotinoids.
- Do not use glyphosate to kill weeds. Not only does it have a lasting environmental impact, but [evidence](#) suggests it may be a driver for antimicrobial resistance and a hormone disruptor in humans and animals. The International Agency for Research on Cancer (a World Health Organization agency) has defined the ingredients in glyphosate as '[probably carcinogenic to humans](#)').
- If you don't have access to a garden, window boxes, hanging baskets and vertical gardens offer a simple, space-saving way to grow flowers, vegetables and herbs.



Stuart Madeley



Emma McCleary



Stephanie Booth

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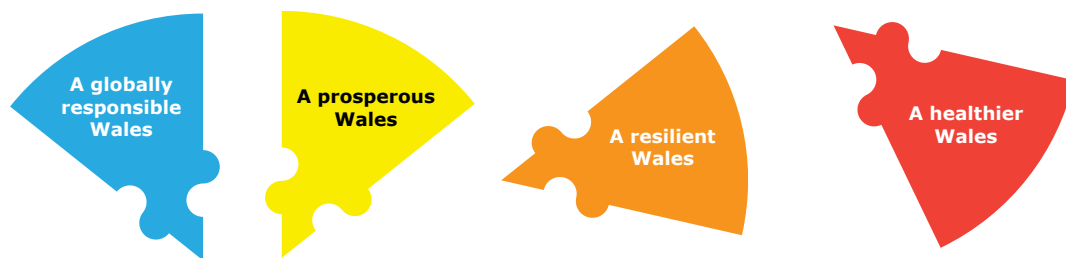
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SUSTAINABLE STEPS:

- Moss is particularly effective at extracting pollutants from the atmosphere, so why not use it to [paint murals in your garden or outdoor space?](#)
- Create space for nature in your home! House plants allow you to bring nature indoors while brightening up individual rooms. Low maintenance plants include snake plant, English ivy and gerbera daisy.
- Get involved in the delivery of your organisation's biodiversity plan.
- Choose biodegradable cleaning products to keep your home and body clean. These break down easily in the natural environment and can be used as food and energy by micro-organisms. You can even use the greywater from shampooing your hair to water your plants!
- Get involved in a citizen science activity, such as [butterfly monitoring](#) or the [Big Garden Birdwatch](#).
- Download a recognition app, such as [Plant Snap](#), to help you identify and learn about different plants and trees.
- Nature is good for us. [Research from the University of Illinois](#) has found that spending time in nature provides protection against a range of diseases, including diabetes, cancer, cardiovascular disease and depression, with higher rates of illness and death associated with less green in a person's surroundings.

This challenge contributes to the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, at least four of Wales' well-being goals and eight UN SDGs:



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Congratulations on completing your Be the Change Well-being Goals Challenge! We hope this will be the first of many and that this guide has helped you to achieve your goals.

We'd really like to hear how it went to capture people's experiences of the challenges and to develop future case studies, so please complete the following feedback form to let us know.

BE THE CHANGE WELL-BEING GOALS CHALLENGE FEEDBACK FORM

Name: (Optional)

Team / Organisation:

Duration of challenge:

1. Which challenge did you choose and why?

2. How did you participate, e.g. individual or team?

3. What were your successes?

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4. Did you encounter any barriers?

5. On a scale of 1 – 10, how likely are you to adopt some of these new behaviours?
If likely, please state which:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Not at all

Extremely

6. On a scale of 1 – 10, has this challenge raised your awareness of key environmental issues? Please state which:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

7. On a scale of 1 - 10, how familiar were you with Wales' Well-being goals before doing the challenge?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Not at all

Extremely

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8. On a scale of 1 - 10, how familiar were you with the UN Sustainable Development Goals before doing the challenge?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Not at all

Extremely

9. On a scale of 1 - 10, did you find the information in this guide helpful?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Not at all

Extremely

Any other comments?

Please return your feedback form to publichealth.sustainability@wales.nhs.uk

Diolch! / Thank you!

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VICKY HANNAH, SENIOR PUBLIC HEALTH PRACTITIONER – TOWARDS ZERO WASTE

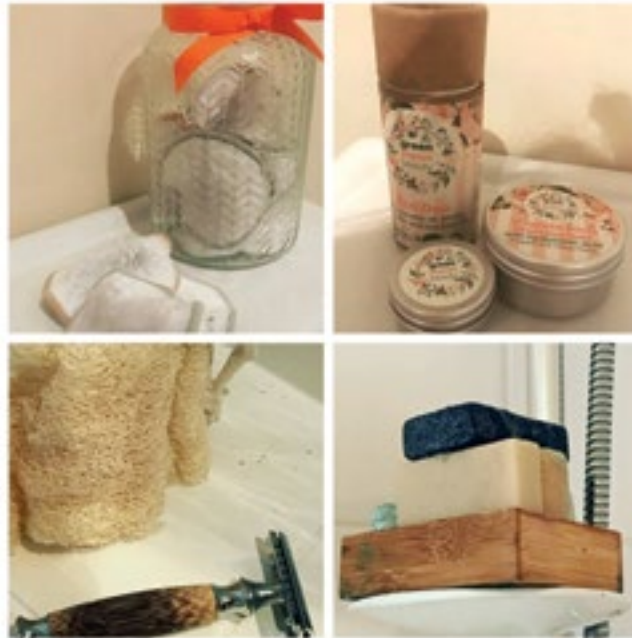
'I do believe any action, no matter how small is an absolutely wonderful thing!'

Over the past few years my awareness, passion and enthusiasm on global and environmental issues has grown. I am particularly passionate about protecting our environment and reducing my plastic footprint, especially single-use plastic. However, it wasn't until the BBC's Blue Planet II when I fully realised how incredibly dangerous plastic is to our environment. I have always been proactive about recycling, but TV shows, such as Hugh's War on Waste, have highlighted just how much of our recycling is actually shipped abroad and dumped!

It has felt overwhelming at times, but I have come to realise that I can only do what I can do and that small actions at a local level are worthwhile. So, my goal for 2020 is to go plastic-free at home! It is a big challenge, but I feel New Year is a great time to make a change. I know my challenge must be manageable, so I am approaching this in phases - each phase being a room and I am starting with the bathroom!

Over the past few months I have taken steps to help me in my challenge. Firstly, I have committed to buying no new hair and beauty products – my collection of shampoos and conditioners has drastically shrunk and I've saved money! Secondly, I have taken advantage of the festive season and asked my family and friends to help me make the leap to plastic-free. This year, under my tree will be: a bamboo razor, reusable shampoo and conditioner bottles, many bars of soap and hopefully a Lush giftset or two!

The timing is right for me to make the move to plastic-free, as I will be moving house next year. I think a big change like that is an opportunity to try and embed new habits, such as composting, plastic-free storage, and shopping locally and seasonally at markets and greengrocers. I have already spoken to my partner Harry about making this as enjoyable as possible by promising brunch and/or coffee as part of our Saturday morning routine!



Plastic free bathroom

Another way I have prepared is by trying to find out about what amazing things are going on, and there are many exciting projects that can help. I have utilised a scheme run by Marks and Spencer - they are collecting non-recyclable plastic items to make playground furniture. This has reduced my black bin waste by over half, and I have been told this initiative is going to be rolled out across the UK, so keep an eye on your local M&S! There are also loads of blogs about simple swaps which have been so useful and Pinterest is amazing for ideas! For example, this Christmas I am using brown paper for wrapping, but Pinterest has given me loads of ideas on how I can make my gifts as beautiful and festive as ever. And, the app is also helping me to plan a plastic and waste-free wedding! Again the ideas are so simple and we'll end up saving money, so it's a win-win!

I'm only at the beginning of my journey to be plastic-free, but I do believe any action, no matter how small is an absolutely wonderful thing! Hopefully this little snapshot of what I am aiming to do in 2020 will be helpful and inspiring to others!

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REBECCA PERSON, MICROBIOLOGY, PUBLIC HEALTH WALES – PLANT-BASED DIET

'I ate healthily and enjoyed the experience.'

I have to admit that I was really quite nervous about starting the plant-based challenge and was actually wondering what I had signed myself up for! Knowing that I was going it alone at home and would have to prepare a separate meal for myself felt a little ominous, but... I survived! Not really the biggest surprise in the world - 7 days without meat, dairy or honey did not kill me. I didn't find eating the food a challenge and enjoyed everything I had. I also didn't find it that different to what I 'normally' eat and I am not 'normally' a vegetarian. The biggest challenge I encountered was the preparation. I found it was not so easy to just grab something and go. I have never checked labels so vigorously in my life! However, I found I became more aware of what I was eating – healthier, fresher, more aware of plastic pollution and the cruelty that occurs in the production of some of the food I would normally consume. It has made me want to shop locally for my fruit and vegetables, supporting the local community, and try to be as plastic free as possible.

During the challenge, I shared my experience on social media and got a really positive response! Many wanted to know how I was getting on, as they were interested in trying a plant-based diet, but so far hadn't made the change. I suppose I should also be honest and state that I was terrified of doing it as I was treated for an eating disorder the year before, so for me the challenge was more than just cutting out meat and dairy.



Injera (Ethiopian flatbread) with lentils, roasted veg and a cashew nut dressing

It was about changing my diet for the first time in a year, without becoming out of control with my eating habits and using it as an excuse not to eat or restrict myself.

I have to say I am very proud of myself, as I did not restrict myself in any way. I ate healthily and enjoyed the experience. It's something I've really thought about and wish to continue, so for the most part I will be plant-based, but I'm not going to beat myself up if I switch to vegetarian if there aren't enough food choices when eating out. Plus, I am fully prepared to revert back if I feel it is in any way having a negative effect on my life.

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INSPIRATION AND INFORMATION

Slow Fashion:

Putting the brakes on fast fashion (United Nations Environment Programme)

Fast Fashion and its Environmental Impact (online article) -
<https://www.thechicselection.com/fast-fashion-its-environmental-impact>

Plant-based Diet:

New plant-focused diet would 'transform' planet's future, (the Guardian):
<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/jan/16/new-plant-focused-diet-would-transform-planets-future-say-scientists>

The EAT-Lancet Commission on Food, Planet, Health –
<https://eatforum.org/eat-lancet-commission/>

Towards Zero Waste:

Where recycled plastic ends up: <https://storyofstuff.org/> (video)

Zero Waste International Alliance: <http://zwia.org/zero-waste-community-principles/>

Healthy Travel:

Sustran's National Cycle Network

Rail Europe – simplified UK and European train bookings

The Man in Seat Sixty-One... – This site explains how to travel comfortably and affordably by train or ferry.

Ethical Consumer:

Bank financing of fossil fuel industries –
https://www.ran.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Banking_on_Climate_Change_2019_vFINAL.pdf

Ethical banks –
<https://medium.com/move-your-money/the-move-your-money-bank-ranking-scorecard-327c4d6e2073>

Supporting Wildlife:

Ecosystem services (animation):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BCH1Gre3Mg0>

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