The Sustainable Steps Series

Helping to make the Well-being of Future Generations Act a positive reality

Hwb Iechyd a Chynaliadwyedd
Health and Sustainability Hub

GIG CYMRU NHS WALES
Iechyd Cyhoeddus Cymru
Public Health Wales

World Health Organization Collaborating Centre
On Investment for Health and Well-being

Be the Change – Procurement that doesn't cost the earth

Each and every one of us in the Welsh public sector has a part to play in making the Well-being of Future Generations Act a reality, and in 'being the change' towards the Wales we want for our current and future generations. Our actions today are already impacting on tomorrow; together, let's make sure it's a positive impact!

Ni yw'r Newid

Be the Change

Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg
This document is available in Welsh

Introduction

The Welsh public sector spends about £7 billion each year on procurement[1]. In Wales procurement is one of the key corporate areas for change identified in the statutory core guidance on the Well-being of Future Generations Act, encouraging us to think about how and where to spend this money in the interest of current and future generations[2].

"Welsh public sector procurement is a powerful lever with ability to affect sustained change to achieve social, economic, environmental and cultural outcomes for the well-being of Wales"[3].

At its most basic, sustainable procurement can mean considering not buying things at all, buying energy and resource efficient goods, ethical goods such as Fairtrade coffee, or locally sourced products and services which support local businesses.

At its most comprehensive, it means systematically considering how procurement can support the delivery of organisational priorities and well-being objectives, ultimately improving the economic, environmental, social, and cultural well-being of Wales.

Sustainable procurement allows us to reduce our impact on the environment and be more globally responsible. It can also help us to support local businesses, build a foundational economy and increase social value.

[1] Welsh Government (2021) **Welsh Procurement Policy Note WPPN 07/21**: Small and Medium Sized Enterprises-friendly procurement
[2] Welsh Government (2015) **Shared Purpose: Shared Future**, SPSF 1: core guidance
[3] Welsh Government (2021) **Welsh Procurement Policy Statement**

The new Wales Procurement Policy Statement, published in 2021, sets the vision for public sector procurement in Wales. It outlines 10 principles that the public sector will follow for procuring well-being for Wales based on the seven well-being goals identified in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act and key Welsh Government policies. In essence the principles that are most directly connected to this 'Be the Change' guide are about:

- Helping people and organisations to procure together, where it's possible to do so, so that we get as much social and economic value as we can from that public spend.

- Procuring products and services with the long-term in mind and showing how procurement is supporting the delivery of an organisation's well-being objectives.

- Supporting places (Foundational Economy) and reducing waste (Circular Economy) through your procurement activity.

- Acting to prevent climate change by prioritising carbon reduction and zero emissions.

- Working with stakeholders to find new and sustainable solutions through what we procure.
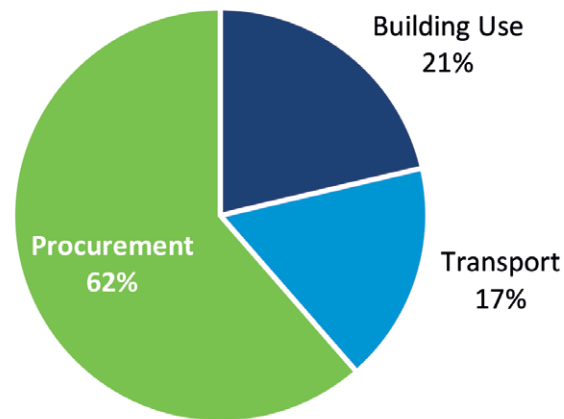
The NHS Wales Carbon Footprint in 2018/19 was approximately 1 million tonnes of CO_2e, of which 62% of emissions were from procurement.

This e-guide provides a raft of ideas and examples to support you to procure sustainably – whether you're at the start of your journey or are looking for additional steps. All are important in helping us to improve Wales' well-being now and in the future.

Footprint by Category 2018/19

Building Use 21%

Transport 17%

Procurement 62%

Contributing to Wales' Well-being Goals and the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals

By its very nature, this e-guide contributes to all of Wales' Well-being Goals and the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

Wales' Seven Well-being Goals

17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals
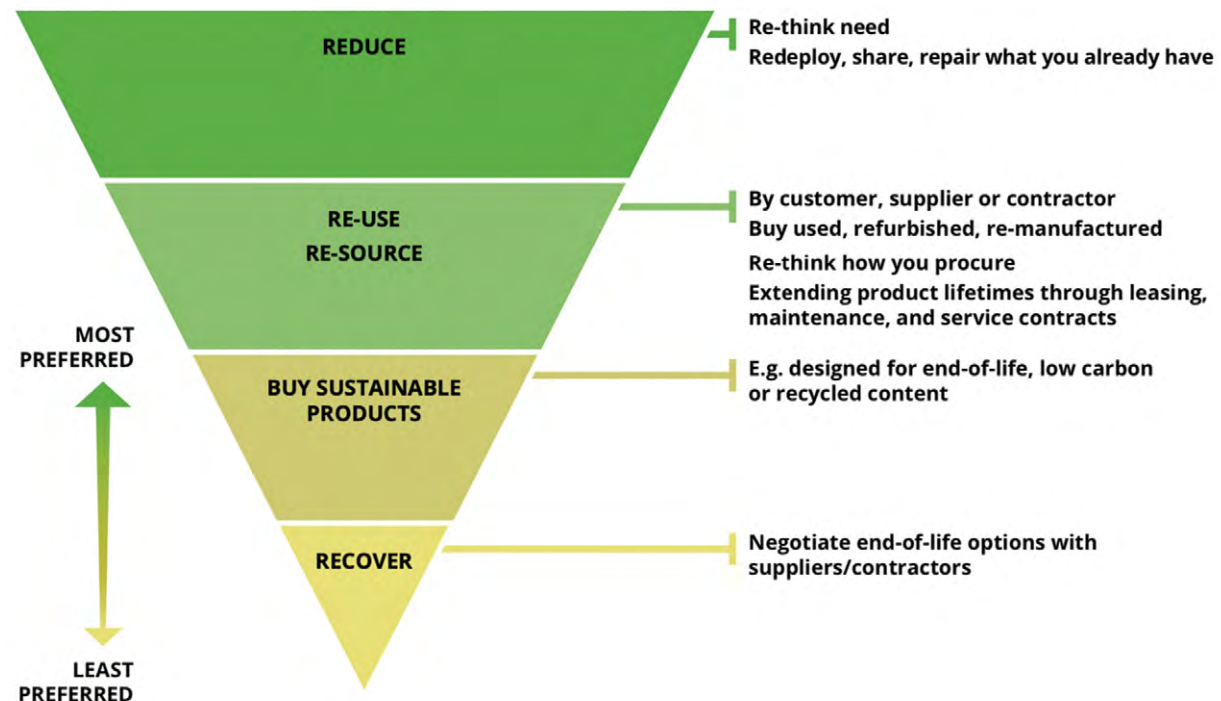
Sustainable steps

Before we buy anything, we must be sure that we need it. If it is needed, following the Sustainable Procurement Hierarchy from top to bottom is a way to help us consider environmental impact when we make our purchasing decisions. The bullet points that follow provide examples under each of these.

Sustainable Procurement Hierarchy

Source: Wrap Cymru (2021)

Reduce (Redeploy, Share and Repair)

🌈 Ask whether you need to purchase the item to begin with.

🌈 Share what you already have.

🌈 Consider whether items can be shared or re-used from another department or organisation.

🌈 Redeploy something from somewhere where it is under-utilised, this could be a piece of equipment in a different part of your organisation.

🌈 If an item is broken, find out whether it can be repaired effectively and economically.

🌈 Consider whether items can be re-purposed or re-manufactured, e.g., furniture, equipment, IT.

🌈 Reduce consumption of single-use items, e.g., drinks cups.

Re-use and Re-source

● Lease or hire products instead of buying them, e.g., photocopier.

● If purchasing a new item, only do so when there is a long warranty or service contract (to cover maintenance and repair) or a take-back arrangement at the end of the products' life.

● Be aware of and develop relationships with local repair and re-use not-for-profit organisations.

● Buy used, refurbished or re-manufactured products, e.g., flooring, furniture, equipment.

Buy Sustainable Products

- Consider the life expectancy of the product. Choose products that are durable and reliable.

- Consider whole product lifecycle costs. This means taking account of the total cost and environmental impact of a product/service over its lifetime.

  - This includes, for example, purchasing/leasing, maintenance, operation, training and disposal

  - As well as the wider environmental and social costs of the product or service, including raw materials, resource extraction, energy consumption, impact on environment, biodiversity, local and global communities

- When procuring an item (new or re-furbished/re-manufactured), specify that you would like it to comprise of the most sustainable materials possible. Key things to prioritise are recycled content, renewable materials, responsible and ethical sourcing.

- Purchase products with third-party validations and certifications and that have a deforestation free supply chain:

  - Forestry Steward Council (FSC) and Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) for wood and paper products

  - Better Cotton Initiative (BCI) for cotton items

  - Organic certification for food and textiles

  - Fairtrade

Buy Sustainable Products

- Buy conflict-free, sustainable, and ethical electronics through independent verification schemes, such as electronicswatch.com or by using Greenpeace Guide to Electronics.

- Buy fair, ethical, sustainable, and seasonal food and drink.

- Source your energy from renewable energy providers and support, where possible, community renewable energy generation schemes.

- Use LED or energy efficient lighting – they use less energy and last a lot longer than incandescent lighting.

- Use only Recycled Paper and set dates to be a paper free and zero waste organisation.

- Should you need to replace vehicles, purchase, or hire electric/hydrogen vehicles.

Recover

● Plan for what happens to your products at their end of life - before you buy them.

● Work with suppliers that offer collection or take-back schemes (e.g., furniture, Information and Communications Technology and even cooking oil).

● Donate goods for re-use (where they cannot be re-used internally) and recycle what remains.

How you make decisions about how to buy goods and services sustainably

- Make sure that staff know how to buy sustainably.

- Recruit sustainability champions for procurement.

- Publish tenders in good time to encourage a range of organisations to respond.

- Improve your knowledge of local businesses, social enterprises, sole traders, and small businesses, and the goods and services they could provide.

- Support sole traders, small businesses, social enterprises, community interest companies to successfully deliver goods and services.

- Consider how you can support social value and deliver social impact through procurement – this looks beyond the financial cost and considers what wider benefits can be achieved by creating jobs and supporting communities.

- Find out what the priorities are in your locality and procure with this in mind.

- Source locally where possible so that you can bring added value to the local economy and reduce carbon emissions.

Ensure that there are social, environmental, and cultural commitments detailed within the contract conditions. This could include fair and ethical employment practice, the creation of employment and training opportunities for groups of people, ways of reducing CO_2, and prioritising social businesses in any sub-contracting.

Evaluate tender responses on quality, whole product lifecycle cost, social, environmental, and cultural considerations, and weight accordingly.

Prioritise suppliers that have a public commitment to source sustainably and support the protection of biodiversity and ecosystems.

Be mindful of where your public spend goes in terms of geography, sector, and business type.
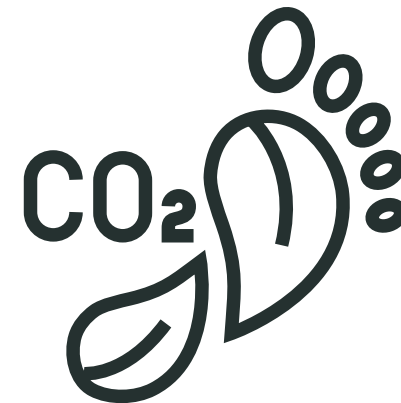
Stories of buying sustainably

An inspirational and collaborative workplace for Public Health Wales

" When Public Health Wales (PHW) moved offices in 2016 it decided to procure an office design and furniture supply contract which would encourage as much reuse of existing office equipment, furniture, and flooring as possible, as well as supplying remanufactured goods from other sources. A supplier 'open day' communicated the key specifications of designing for a collaborative workspace environment and reusing as much furniture as possible. The winning consortium, which included social enterprises, supplied over 2,500 items. Of these items, only 6% of them were new, and the rest were remanufactured or refurbished, with a significant share having been reused from PHW's existing stock. The circular approach diverted 41 tonnes of waste from landfill - with a CO_2 saving of 134 tonnes." "

How surplus printer cartridges have led to 800 trees being planted

" When Mark Roden took responsibility for the storeroom at Public Health Wales' Microbiology, he found a large amount of toner cartridges. He suspected that these were no longer required. He recorded the location and model of every printer across the department to work out which cartridges weren't needed.

In the first instance, Mark offered the surplus cartridges to the wider public health network but with no success. He decided to look for a company who would recycle them. He came across Cartridge Forest, who plant trees for every reusable cartridge that they are sent. Mark sent 40 surplus printer cartridges and in return 800 tress have been planted, saving an estimated 144 tonnes of CO_2. "

[Welsh solar farm exceeds expectations in powering Morriston Hospital](#)

"Swansea Bay University Health Board's Morriston Hospital is connected to the 10,000-panel Brynwhillach Solar Farm by a two-mile cable. Between November 2021 and March 2022, it has already saved over £500,000 producing over 2.3 MW of electricity, and the Health Board has also been able to sell back power to the energy grid.

What has come as a pleasant surprise is that for a total of 367.25 hours, the hospital has been entirely powered by the solar farm. It is hoped that with further fine-tuning that additional savings and efficiencies can be made.

The £5.7m solar farm was built under a loan scheme set up by the Welsh government to decarbonise the public sector by 2030. The Health Board wants to improve people's health and reducing pollution and the impact of climate change is a crucial part of that."

[Cardiff and Vale University Health Board 'Sustainable theatres'](#)

"In 2019, Cardiff and Vale UHB were the first Health Board to announce a climate emergency and have taken measures to develop 'sustainable theatres'. The project has brought together health, academics and industry experts, collaborating with Cardiff University, to design and build sustainable operating theatres. It aims to reduce the carbon footprint of theatres which typically make up 20-30% of a hospital's carbon footprint. This highlights how procurement can be used to support the delivery of their strategic priorities as well as supporting their well-being objective to 'reduce harm, waste and variation sustainably, making best use of the resources available to us'."

Want to learn more?

Here is a selection of resources that can help.

Repair Café Wales
Repair Café events are run by local communities where members of the public can bring their damaged or broken household items for repair (for example, technology, clothes, bicycles). The repair café volunteers then attempt to repair items and encourage the public to join in and learn how their item is being fixed so that they can attempt similar repair in the future.

Benthyg Cymru - Wales' Library of Things
This a network of places where people can borrow items at affordable prices that they can't afford to buy or might only need occasionally or for a short time. People can also donate things they own but don't need, contributing to national waste reduction targets; and meet to share knowledge and skills with each other, increasing community resilience.

Electronics Watch
Electronics Watch help public sector organisations work together and collaborate with civil society to monitor electronic supply chains and support ethical procurement of equipment.

Can Do Declaration
A declaration about the way we could deliver public investment in Wales.

Sustainable Procurement Platform
This is a one-stop shop for resources on sustainable public procurement (e.g., criteria, guidance, case studies).

Centre for Sustainable Healthcare: How to…provide tasty, healthy and environmentally friendly hospital meals
This is a guide for procurement teams and caterers.

Fairtrade
Fairtrade works with farming co-operatives, businesses, and governments to make trade fair. Together with Fairtrade farmers and workers we have a vision: a world in which trade is based on fairness so that producers earn secure and sustainable livelihoods.

Deforestation Free Procurement Toolkit
This toolkit by Size of Wales is designed to help the Welsh public sector ensure that the products and commodities they buy do not lead to tropical deforestation and habitat destruction overseas.

Beyond Recycling
Welsh Government's plan to make the circular economy in Wales a reality, where we keep resources in use and avoid waste.

Office of the Future Generations Commissioner
The Commissioner has published a few reports on procurement:
Future Generations Report 2020: a spotlight on procurement
The Future Generations Report analyses the progress of all public bodies in implementing the Well-being of Future Generations Act since it became law in 2015. This is a link to the chapter on leadership and implementation where there is a spotlight on procurement.

Procurement – bitesize
This summarises the Future Generations Commissioner's vision for procurement, highlighting key issues and recommendations.

Introduction

Contributing to Wales' well-being / UN goals

Sustainable steps

Reduce (Redeploy, Share and Repair)

Re-use and Re-source

Buy Sustainable Products

Recover

How you make decisions about how to buy goods and services sustainably

Stories of buying sustainably

Want to learn more?

Join the conversation

Join the conversation

We would like to hear about the actions that you are taking to live and work sustainably. It would be great if you could also share with and inspire others by posting photos on social media using #BeTheChangeWales.

Together, we can 'be the change'!

Simple **acts** can have big **impacts**
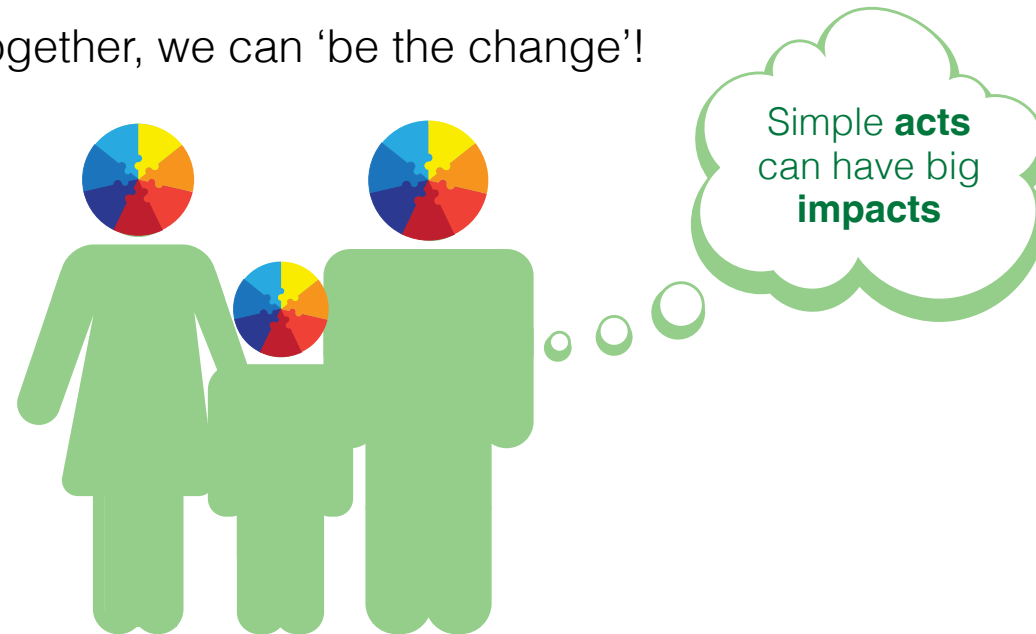
This resource has been developed by Public Health Wales' Health and Sustainability Hub in collaboration with Dotiau